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85294

YEARS FLYING EXPERIENCE 16 August 1942 Before 1115

PILOT'S NAME CODY, Ernest D., Lt.

HOURS FLYING EXPERIENCE

NAME AND RANK OF PILOT CODY, Ernest D., Lt.

SERVICE AND GROUP USN

ORGANIZATION ZP-32

DATE OF PILOT RATING 1942 FLYING EXPERIENCE (YEARS) 1

HRS. THIS MODEL LAST 3 MOS. TOTAL HOURS 800.0 est.

PREVIOUS ACCIDENT RECORD Clear

INJURIES Missing.

NAME AND RANK OF OTHER PERSONNEL

Ens. Charles E. Adams, USN MISSING

INJ.

ANALYSIS

Airship made crash landing but occupants are not accounted for. Ship was intact at final landing except starboard depth charge (which was later recovered). There was no indication of fire or any other reason for hasty departure. Both engines were stopped when ship was first seen from the beach but no reason discovered for stoppage. Board believes the passenger might have fallen out when the safety latch was accidentally released. Presence of all parachutes rules out abandonment at a considerable altitude and failure to use radio or life raft might indicate pilot hoped to recover his passenger very quickly. The open door latched fully forward, microphone and radio head-set hanging out door lend credence to this theory. In such an attempt pilot might himself have gone overboard.

U. S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS AIRCRAFT TROUBLE ANALYSIS FORM N. AER. 330-A

100% Undetermined

PERCENTAGE EACH CAUSE

100% Undetermined

U. S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS AIRCRAFT TROUBLE ANALYSIS FORM N. AER. 330-A

CAPT AL. RATHER USN (DET.)

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

of a

BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

Convened at the

U. S. NAVAL AIR STATION

MOFFETT FIELD, CALIFORNIA

by order of

COMMANDER, WESTERN SEA FRONTIER

San Francisco, California

To inquire into the accident to the U. S. Navy Non-rigid

Airship L-8 on August 16, 1942.

August 18, 1942

COPY

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of a

BOARD OF INVESTIGATION

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San Francisco, California

To inquire into the accident to the U. S. Navy Non-rigid

Airship L-5 on August 16, 1942.

August 18, 1942

COPY

9 August 1945

(Original filed in  
Central Office, U.S.

NAS, Moffett Field, Calif.)

**C O P Y**

Board of Investigation convened at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, 18 August, 1942, to inquire into the landing and deflation of the United States Navy non-rigid airship L-8 in the City of Daly City, State of California, which occurred on the morning of August 16, 1942.

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U U U L

U. S. Naval Air Station  
Moffett Field, California  
Tuesday, August 18, 1942.

The board met at 10 a.m.

President:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) USNR, member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, USN, (Ret), member, and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S) USNR, recorder.

The members of the board were duly sworn by the recorder.

The senior members of the board administered the oath to the recorder.

The recorder introduced George Finley Phillips, Junior, yeoman second class, V-6, USNR, as reporter. The prescribed oath was administered to the reporter, who took seat as such.

The Convening order, hereto prefixed, was read and the two clerical errors found therein were corrected as follows: page 1, paragraph 1, line 2, "A-V(N)" was changed to read "A-V(G)"; page 1, paragraph 2, line 4, "CODE" was changed to read "COPY."

The board determined upon its procedure and decided to sit with closed doors.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

The board announced that it would adjourn to the hangar at the U. S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

All members, the recorder and the reporter, assembled in the hangar and proceeded to make an inspection of the salvaged parts and equipment of the U.S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8. The board then, at 11:25 a.m. took a recess until 1:30 p.m. at which time it reconvened in the board room at the U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California. Present were all members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank and present station.

A. George F. Watson, Lieutenant Commander, USN, attached to and commanding Airship Patrol Squadron 32.

2. Q. Was the U.S. Navy non-rigid Airship L-8 under your command on August 16, 1942?

A. It was.

3. Q. Please give us a brief history of the L-8, particularly with reference to any previous damage or injury up to the time of the take-off on Sunday morning, August 16, 1942.

A. The L-8 was originally erected at Moffett Field on February 13, 1942, and was test flown by representatives of the Goodyear Aircraft Company and was accepted by me for the Navy on March 5, 1942.

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The L-8 had 1092.5 hours in flight up until the time of the accident. The L-8 has been used principally on expeditionary bases at Treasure Island, Watsonville and Los Angeles. The greater part of her time she has been at Treasure Island operating from an expeditionary mast and being returned to Moffett Field only for inspection, maintenance and overhaul work. The L-8 returned from Los Angeles to Moffett Field August 11, 1942 and was given its monthly inspection by the A&R Department of the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, on August 12, 1942, and was sent to Treasure Island to operate from that point on August 13, 1942, with Lieutenant Ernest Cody as senior aviator in the squadron unit. We have experienced no trouble with the L-8 beyond the minor upkeep requirements of an airship operating from an expeditionary base. The ship has always flown well and has a good reputation for flying well. On March 13, 1942, the L-8 underwent a very severe storm while at the mast on Treasure Island and successfully weathered the storm with only minor damage. The airship was returned to Moffett Field under its own power, inspected and such repairs as were required were made. The principal damage to the ship at that time was to the two propellers which struck the ground during the storm, repair of which propellers was attempted but they have not been since used. They are not the propellers used on the ship now. Other than that, there was no damage of any consequence to the ship. The L-8 was a new ship and unused at the time of its original erection at Moffett Field, California. It was of a standard non-rigid type designated in the Navy as ZNN, commonly used for training purposes but assigned to the squadron for observation and short patrol purposes due to the lack of the larger patrol types for assignment. The L-8 has a cubic gas content of 123,000 cubic feet. It is powered by two Warner Super-Scarab type 50 engines of 145 h.p. each. It carried two Mark 17 Aircraft depth bombs, it had fuel capacity of 150 gallons, the fuel load depending upon the mission and the current lift of the ship. The crew consisted of a minimum of two people, one the command pilot. The ship frequently carried an additional person during the middle-of-the-day flights when it had super-heat. The ship was approximately 150 feet long and approximately 47 feet at maximum diameter and was of streamline shape. It carried a 30-calibre aircraft free machine gun which could be mounted at the pilot's discretion. Under normal conditions of loading, the ship was required to make a statically heavy take-off. This was the case on the take-off for the flight on the morning of August 16. The normal consumption of fuel at cruising speeds was twelve (12) gallons per hour and air speed of forty-three (43) knots.

4.Q. Please give us a brief statement of all the information you have concerning the take-off the L-8 made on the morning of Sunday, August 16, 1942, and its subsequent deflation and landing.

(A. The airship L-8 departed from Treasure Island at 0603, PWT, with Lieutenant Ernest D. Cody, USN command pilot and Ensign (T) Charles E. Adams, USN, attached to the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, as passenger for a normal patrol flight as flight 101. The ship proceeded over the Golden Gate and headed Southwesterly in the normal course for the assigned patrol. At 0738 (all times are Pacific War Time), the L-8, by radio, sent to the Wing Control, a message "Position four (4) miles East of Farallones--stand by." This message was received by the Wing Control. At 0742, the L-8 sent a second message "Am investigating suspicious oil slick--stand by." This message was received by the Wing Control. At approximately 0817, Wing Control attempted to contact the L-8 by radio unsuccessfully. from that time until 1120, when the ship was reported down, repeated attempts by the Wing Control radio, by other aircraft on the same circuit, and by the Treasure Island airship radio unit, were unsuccessfully made to raise the L-8 by radio.) These attempts were intercepted by the squadron radio watch and I was informed of the fact that the L-8 was out of radio communication at about 0820. This caused me no particular concern or apprehension as to the safety of the ship since the weather conditions were satisfactory and I had complete confidence in Lieutenant Cody's being able to take care of the



situation. However, from this time on until about 1100, I had a telephone conversation with the Wing operations officer, Lieutenant Commander Dartach. None of us was apprehensive regarding the safety of the crew or ship at this time since it was not far removed from shore and was in a well-populated sea area. However, as a matter of precaution, the Wing Control Officer directed any aircraft in the same area who sighted the L-8, to report its position. This message was sent out, I believe, some time between 0930 and 1000. At approximately 1105, the Wing Control Officer called me and told me that an Army P-38 had sighted the L-8 near Mile Rock. To digress for a moment, the L-8, under normal conditions, would have landed at Treasure Island, at 1030, but since he was known to be inspecting suspicious conditions and with plenty of fuel, we felt no concern about his being slightly overdue. When I received the information he was near Mile Rock I assumed he was proceeding to return to Treasure Island. At this time we were preparing the TC-14 for a take-off to search the area for the L-8. I phoned the Officer of the Deck of our Treasure Island unit, Ensign Ulrich, and informed him that we had received word that the L-8 was near Mile Rock, and to keep a sharp lookout and inform me when the ship crossed the Gate and that I would hold the TC-14 for a few minutes, pending that word. At this time, Ensign Ulrich informed me had just received word by telephone from some enlisted man that the L-8 was seen over land south of the City of San Francisco in a mishapen condition.

5. Q. What was the time on that?

A. It was about 1115, sir. This was the first report I had had that the ship had actually been sighted over land and I immediately terminated my conversation with Ensign Ulrich and received a call from Wing Control, informing me that they had a report that the ship had landed at Fort Funston and that the two persons in the ship had disembarked. I directed my Executive Officer to organize a salvage party under the charge of Lieutenant R. J. Blair, USNR, to proceed to Fort Funston to salvage the ship. Before the salvage party or I, myself could leave the station, we received a further report from Wing Control that the ship had landed and deflated at 444 Bellevue Avenue, Daly City, California. I proceeded immediately for that location as did Lieutenant Blair and the salvage party, leaving Moffett Field with the impression that the men in the ship were at Fort Funston. I was therefore somewhat surprised and disconcerted upon arrival at the scene of the deflation not to find Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Adams there. However, I was still under the impression they had disembarked at Fort Funston and would arrive shortly. Lieutenant Blair and the salvage party arrived at 1215. Upon arrival at the scene of the deflation I found that Ensign Ulrich and Ensign Sprague had arrived a few minutes earlier from Treasure Island. Sprague had immediately gone into the car of the ship and as far as we know he was the first person in the car after the final landing. Sprague tells me he found both ignition switches on, the fuel valves to two of the fuel tanks open, the engines, and the radio motor-generator still running. Sprague turned the ignition switches off and turned off the radio generator. We made no immediate attempt to ascertain the damage to the ship although it was obvious that there was only minor damage to the structural part of the ship and it was expected that the bag would be severely torn as is the normal situation in a forced landing of that nature. I then proceeded to call both my Executive Officer at Moffett Field and Wing Control, to ascertain if there was further information regarding the crew of the ship. Neither had any information regarding the crew of the ship other than the rumor that they were at Fort Funston and that no verification or denial had been obtained up to that time. There were also present at the scene of the accident an officer from Public Relations, Lieutenant Commander Redlick, an officer from the District Intelligence Office whose name I failed to obtain, and an Ensign from the Coast Guard from South San Francisco Coast Guard Station. I asked the Public Relation and Intelligence officers to please keep me informed on any information they might obtain regarding the location of the crew or the movements of the ship. Shortly thereafter word was received from several sources that

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the ship had touched in the vicinity of the Lakeside Country Club near the beach. The starboard depth charge was missing from the ship, obviously having been dislocated by a blow so that a search was instituted to locate this depth charge. This search was made under the direction of Lieutenant St. Claire, U.S.N., an Assistant Patrol Officer from San Francisco. Lieut. St. Claire had at his disposal approximately 40 men, which force was supplemented by 40 men from the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, and about 50 men from the U.S. Army Post nearby. The bomb was located at about 1500, near the spot where the ship had first hit the ground. The bomb was taken into custody by an Army Bomb Demolition Group and is still in their custody. I can get that back any time we want it. At this time several reports had come in through various sources to indicate that the ship had definitely hit on a beach near the Lakeside Country Club, dislodging the bomb and again taken to the air, making its only other contact with the ground at the point of final descent. The most reliable information (and also substantiated by several witnesses) was convincing that no one was in the ship at the time it first touched the shore. I immediately contacted Wing Control to find what steps were being taken to institute a search at sea. I was informed that the airships TC-13 and TC-14 were both in the area searching, and four OS2U planes had been dispatched for special search in addition to all other aircraft in that area directed to be alert and that the Commander Patrol Force and Coast Guard were dispatching a number of surface craft to join the search. Up until this time I had been convinced that the crew had stayed with the ship until its first contact with shore, as this would be the expected procedure even though the engines had failed previously. The salvage of the ship being about completed at about 1600, I proceeded to the Wing Control Center at the Naval Air Station, Alameda, as a central location to keep myself informed of the progress of the search and to be available to the Wing Commodore if he desired me. I found that all steps possible were being taken to make a thorough search both ashore and afloat and from the air with all available craft and personnel. This search continued by aircraft until darkness set in and the visibility and ceiling lowered to the point where the aircraft could no longer assist. The surface search was continued and augmented and is still continuing. The aircraft search has been resumed during all periods when light, ceiling and visibility permitted. A complete and thorough search was made over all territory where there was any faint possibility that personnel might be ashore. It was agreed that this search had been adequate and complete and could be discontinued as an organized search at sunset on August 17, 1942. Up until the present time we have had no indication of when, where or why the personnel abandoned the airship.

6. Q. Perhaps I overlooked it, but did we have anything covering the orders for this flight? Are those issued by you?

A. The procedure followed in making flights from the outlying bases, Treasure Island specifically, was that the senior aviator would consult the local weather authorities at Treasure Island and would obtain clearance there for the flight directly from Wing Control. At the same time the squadron officer of the deck at Moffett Field was directed to consult the local Aerological Forecast Officer one-half hour prior to such flight and if, for any reason, the flight was not considered advisable, to notify me and to hold the airship on the ground. Otherwise, the question of when to take off and the advisability of taking off was left to the discretion of the senior aviator at Treasure Island, as regulated by clearance from Wing Control. The weather conditions vary so much locally within this area that it was frequently impracticable for us to tell at Moffett Field whether it was advisable for him to fly at Treasure Island. He had adequate means to obtain all weather information. We could check him from here if necessary. He called to receive proper clearance for the flight. The operational orders for the L-8 are assigned by Wing Control daily, usually by phone, supplemented by sufficient written information as is required for special missions.

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7. Q. What is the usual course of patrol of the L-8?

A. The L-8 was restricted to an area 50 miles in radius from the Golden Gate. Its ordinary patrol was to proceed from the Gate to the Farallones, to Point Reyes, to Montara, to the Gate and repeat as often as practicable.

8. Q. What is the usual altitude of flight by the L-8?

A. The altitude was generally regulated by the ceiling. The ship at the time had a pressure height altitude of approximately 2100 feet in order that it might climb on top of normal overcast. The pressure height altitude of an airship is that altitude to which the airship may rise without necessity for valving helium. This is generally the regulating altitude for operations, since it is not ordinarily desirable to valve helium in flight.

9. Q. What would be the normal procedure if the engines of a ship comparable to the L-8 failed?

A. The accepted practice in any airship whose engines fail and over which you lose dynamic control is to resort to static control or free ballooning. If the ship is statically light, you must valve helium and regain static equilibrium and attain constant altitude as quickly as possible. If the ship is statically heavy, this means you must drop weight. Another consideration is that it is necessary to keep pressure in the ship in order that it may retain its shape and proper load distribution. It may, therefore, be necessary to increase your altitude in order to build up pressure from time to time.

10. Q. Was there any evidence when you saw the ship that the ship was statically controlled at all?

A. No, nothing positive and nothing even convincing. The only weight on the ship which might have been dropped was fuel from the dump tank. We cannot be sure whether or not this was dumped since the fuel from this tank was accidentally valved during the salvage operations. There, however, remained considerable disposable weight in the ship which was not used. There was additional fuel that could have been dropped and the depth charges could have been dropped in an unarmed condition. The various loose weights on the car could have been disposed of.

11. Q. In your opinion would the L-8 have been manageable as a free balloon after the stoppage of both engines?

A. Yes sir. I consider this is definitely so and proved by the fact that the L-2, even without a pilot, made a landing which would not have killed its personnel had they remained with the ship. Further, the fact there was considerable disposable weight remaining in the ship would make it possible and even desirable to continue the operation of the airship as free ballooning, even though the engines had failed and this would be the normal procedure. The fact that the ship had lost its shape is due to the loss of pressure in the ship as in a non-rigid ship of this type, the pressure is regulated in order to keep its shape, there being no structure contained inside the bag for that purpose and while the loss of shape created a somewhat dangerous situation in that it throws the load of the car and its equipment into concentrated points rather than the proper distribution through the top of the bag when the ship is in its normal shape, it is usually considered possible to fly the non-rigid airships as free balloons, for considerable periods of time, even though it be at atmospheric pressure and the bag considerably misshapen. The indications are that the airship had not lost a considerable amount of

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helium during this flight although it is my opinion that at some time it went over pressure height and some helium was valved causing its first known descent at the beach.

12. Q. In your opinion would release of the two depth bombs have adequately compensated for the presumed loss of helium and have permitted continued free ballooning with the two crew members aboard?

A. Yes sir. It is my opinion that the ship should have been near equilibrium at 0730--its last reported position--due to the expenditure of fuel and the heating caused by the rising sun and that any remaining heaviness could have been compensated for easily by valving fuel from the dump tank. This would have been a better and more reasonable method since this fuel could be dropped in regulated amounts. The dropping of a 325-pound weight from a ship this size would have likely caused the ship to rise rapidly and would have complicated the problem of getting the ship into static equilibrium.

13. Q. Did inspection following salvage indicate whether or not the depth charges could have been released in flight?

A. The starboard depth charge rack, as previously described, had been distorted and the depth charge torn away forcibly on first contact with the beach. The port depth charge was in place and was removed by operation of the bomb release which functioned in normal fashion.

14. Q. Who has custody of the radio and ship logs of the L-8?

A. I have these documents in my custody. Here they are. These logs were found in the L-8 after its final landing and were delivered to me intact as I now present them.

(Photostatic copies of cover of the L-8's ship log and pages for flight No. 112 and flight of August 16, 1942, are attached hereto and marked "Exhibit 1". Photostatic copies of cover of the L-8's radio log and two pages from this log for flight 112 are attached hereto and marked "Exhibit 2")

15. Q. From the reports you have received, could you express an opinion as to the course of the ship during any period of time from departure until it deflated and landed in Daly City?

A. Yes, we have reports indicating that the ship proceeded directly from the Golden Gate to the point four miles East of the Farallones as its reported position at 0738. The ship was next sighted by Pan American Clipper pilot Richards, who reported sighting the L-8 at 1049. The Clipper reported "Over the Golden Gate Bridge. The L-8 located at a position three miles south and one mile off shore from the Golden Gate Bridge at an altitude of 800 to 1000 feet." The pilot reported he noticed nothing obviously wrong with the ship at that time. I have previously stated that the Army P-38 airplane reported this ship near Mile Rock at 1053. It appears that this position was only quite approximate. At about 1100, Navy OS2U airplane reported the L-8 at a position three miles West of Salada Beach. This was only an approximate position. The pilots of the Navy plane stated he saw the ship rise through the overcast at about 2000 feet and then shortly thereafter descend and nothing in the ship's action at that time indicated to him that the ship was not in controlled flight. These are the only additional reports that we have which have any flavor of authenticity and the position of the ship between 0743 and 1049 has not been established. We have inquired to obtain any records made by the Army

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radex station which might give further indication of the ship's movements during this intervening period. Those records have not yet been received. Further requests have been made to the Port Director, Coast Guard authorities at the Harbor Entrance Control Post, asking that they make inquiry from all surface craft who might have been in that area during this time. No reports have been received from these sources up to the present.

16. Q. Do you know the static condition of the ship on the particular morning in question?

A. It was reported to me by Ensign Ulrich, who was in charge of the ground party, that the ship was 200 pounds statically heavy at the take-off on the morning of August 16. This is well within the limits which we have established for the L-type ship as a static heaviness of 600 pounds is allowed when conditions require.

17. Q. What armament was aboard the L-8 on the morning of August 16, 1942?

A. The ship was loaded with two Mark 17 MOD. 1 aircraft depth charges, weight 325 pounds each, one 30-calibre free aircraft machine gun, weight 31 pounds and 300 rounds of ammunition, weight 25½ pounds.

18. Q. What disposable ballast or equipment was aboard the L-8 when she took off on August 16?

A. The most readily disposable ballast was the 50 gallons of gas in the dump tank representing a weight of 300 pounds, and this was the normal method of lightening ship when required. The next most readily disposable weight was the depth charges, each weighing 325 pounds and which could be safely dropped in the unarmed condition. Other weights--the machine gun could be used for ballast, also the battery, particularly after becoming exhausted, is considered ready ballast--chairs, radio equipment and even parachutes may be used when circumstances dictate.

19. Q. What emergency equipment was aboard the ship at the time of take-off?

A. The ship was equipped with three QAC parachutes. The ship was also equipped with three standard inflatable life belts which were usually donned by the crew--one for each--before leaving the shore line. The ship was equipped with a four-man inflatable rubber boat. The ship also carried a Very pistol with ammunition, a signal light, a loud-speaking horn, in addition to its radio equipment, and a reserve lubricating oil supply. The emergency rations were not normally carried in these small ships since they were usually operating over congested areas. A small tool kit and a standard Navy first-aid box were carried.

20. Q. What, if any, of this equipment you just listed was missing at the time the ship landed at Daly City on Sunday, August 16?

A. The only items which did not remain in the ship were two of the life preservers which were assumed to be worn by the two officers in the ship. The parachutes and harnesses, life boats and other items of equipment were found intact and unused in their normal locations in the ship.

21. Q. Were all the tools in the tool kit?

A. I am not positive. This information, I believe, can be more positively given by Ensign Sprague, who is Squadron Assistant Engineer and who made the first inspection of the car and I am sure will know what tools were carried and what tools remained.

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22. Q. What was the condition of the L-8 at the time you arrived at the scene of the ship where it landed in the street?

A. The gas bag was completely deflated. The car was resting on its stern end approximately 60 degrees inclined up. The starboard engine had struck the ground at some point and there was a considerable amount of dirt and leaves stuck inside of the cowl and between the cylinders. The starboard depth charge was missing with the starboard depth charge rack dished in and the landing rail in the way of the starboard depth charge considerably dished in. A small deflection in the longeron opposite this point. The starboard propeller seemed to be completely undamaged. The port engine was undamaged as far as could be seen by visual inspection. The port propeller had one tip slightly bent, apparently due to the scraping along the roadway. The port depth charge remained in place on its rack. The car showed evidence of contact with high-tension wires which were known to have been knocked down on its final descent. The fins had obviously suffered only minor damage and were still attached to the bag. The ship was removed in its entirety to Moffett Field where a more thorough inspection has been made.

23. Q. Who was in charge of the Salvage operations?

A. Lieutenant Rowland J. Blair was in charge of salvaging the ship at Daly City and as the Flight Maintenance Officer of the squadron is now in charge of inspecting, reconditioning and erecting the ship for further service. Lieutenant Blair will, in this process, make a complete and detailed record of the damage suffered by the aircraft and the time and approximate cost of returning it to service.

24. Q. Did the condition of the propellers indicate definitely whether the engines were running or stopped at the time of final landing?

A. I am convinced that the engines were stopped at the time the ship made its final landing, although the switches were on and there was fuel connected to the engines. The total time on these engines--the port engine had 4125 hours and the starboard engine 890.4 hours. The time since the last major overhaul--port engine, 488.7 hours, starboard engine, 240.9 hours. The engines were normally run 700 hours between major overhauls.

25. Q. Have you experienced any engine failures since last overhaul?

A. We have had no engine stoppage since last overhaul. The only casualty suffered was the breaking of the starter housing on the starter engine but the reasons for this were found and corrected. This trouble was minor and would not stop the engine.

26. Q. Since the ship was salvaged, has any check been made with reference to fuel in the ship as to whether or not any foreign substance was present?

A. The main fuel strainer was examined by the Engineering Officer and also the two carburetor fuel strainer was examined by the Engineering Officer and also the two carburetor fuel strainers. Only a slight trace of water was found and by no means enough to indicate that this might be the cause of an engine stoppage. This inspection was made under the direction of Lieutenant (j.g.) L. E. Stillwell, U.S.N.R.

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27. Q. Since the salvage of the ship has been returned to Moffett Field, has any test or check been made to the radio equipment on board.

A. The radio equipment was checked immediately upon return to Moffett Field for frequencies and the transmitters and both receivers were found properly set on the assigned frequencies for this flight. A fresh battery was placed in the ship and both the transmitters and receivers were tested for operation and were found to operate satisfactorily and in normal fashion. As part of the test, after return to Moffett Field, the ship's battery having been found in a near-exhausted condition a fresh battery was placed in the ship and the radio transmitter and the two radio receivers were turned on and tested for correct operation. All parts of the radio equipment, except antennae (which had been torn away during the deflation), were found to be operating normally.

28. Q. Can you explain the electrical system of the L-8?

A. The electrical system of the L-8 consisted of one 15-volt direct current, 25 amperes capacity main engine-driven generator mounted on the port engine. A 34-ampere hour, 12-volt battery floated on the generator. The electrical load consisted principally of the radio and loud-speaking system, plus the engine starters when used, and the running-light load at night. I may add, the problem of electrical supply has always been one of considerable concern in the operation of these small ships. Whenever practicable, the engines were started on the ground with shore batteries in order that the ship's battery might be fresh after take-off. In ordinary flight, and with normal use of radio and loud-speaking equipment, the generator was adequate to carry the load. However, any cranking of the engine immediately presented a problem and a critical problem, because of the fact that these engines were not equipped with any type of hand starter. If an engine failed in the air it had to be started electrically or else it could not be started at all. It was standard doctrine in operating the L-type ship that should the engines fail, a radio transmission of position and circumstances should be made before the battery might become exhausted due to repeated attempts to start the engine. The loud-speaker system consisted essentially of a standard Bogen type audio amplifier with a vibrator source of supply actuating a small four-inch loud-speaking horn. This equipment was used to communicate with surface craft who would not be contacted by radio. The electrical requirements of this system were approximately 12 amperes which, as can be seen, is a rather heavy load for the electrical system. The system was found turned on but only in the "stand-by" condition. With only the stand-by switch on, the amplifier draws two (2) completely off except when its use is required. However, due to location of the amplifier and its switches, accidental turning on of this equipment was frequently caused by movements of the pilot's and co-pilot's feet. It is therefore impossible to say that the amplifier had been deliberately placed in the stand-by condition.

29. Q. What was the condition of the battery?

A. The battery was found to be in a near-exhausted condition, though not to the point of being sulphated. We have no means of determining whether there was sufficient energy remaining to crank an engine but it is considered doubtful whether the battery had enough energy to either crank the engine or to operate the radio transmitter for normal or even slightly normal output.

The battery alone would allow at least ten (10) short sessions of messages by radio without difficulty--that is, without vibrator.

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30. Q. What was the condition of the internal and external catenary system?

A. The entire catenary system was found undamaged and will be immediately used again. The gas valves and air valves were found undamaged and suitable for immediate use. The only part of the bag that was known to be torn before contact at final landing was the ceiling or fairing strip around the stern of the car in between the bag and the car where small fabric strips are laced usually to the top of the car and then glued to the bag and we are positive that the fairing strip had pulled away from the bag and it still remained on the car. I think that is to be expected. That has no structural function and is placed principally for the sake of appearance. The gas dump valve was found in normal operating condition and was inadvertently operated, during the salvage of the ship. Further tests have indicated it was in its normal condition.

31. Q. What was the condition of the instruments?

A. The instruments were given only visual inspection and all were undamaged. The clock was still operating and keeping correct time. We also ran continuity test on magneto switches and the fuel circuits were complete.

32. Q. Has any check or examination been made of the engines of the L-8 or is any anticipated?

A. Only visual inspection is possible at the present time at Moffett Field. The engines have been sent today, August 18, to Pacific Air Motors for inspection and disassembly. Lieutenant (j.g.) Stillwell, the Squadron Junior Engineering Officer, will be present during the disassembly of these engines and will attempt to determine what, if any, part of the engines were in improper condition or did not function properly.

33. Q. What disposition of salvaged parts of the L-8 is contemplated?

A. All parts of the airship, with the exception of the gas envelope, are being inspected and overhauled where found necessary and will be used with a spare gas envelope now available here, to assemble and erect the L-8 for continued service. It is expected that the ship will be returned to service about September 1, 1942. The gas envelope is being turned over to the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, for inspection and recommendation as to disposition.

34. Q. From your examination of the ship after landing at Daly City, or any other subsequent examination, did you find any evidence that the car or any portion of the ship had touched the water?

A. No. I personally inspected the car and lower fin very carefully for evidence of salt water. I am positive that the bottom of the car was at no time in contact with the sea. The lower fin showed some salt deposit but it is my opinion that this may have been caused from being moored at Treasure Island where the constant beat of spray very likely caused considerable salt deposits around the ship. On the port side of the car there was definite indication of salt water having been splashed at a point just above the depth charge. The bilges of the ship and the various openings in the lower part of the car were dry and still contained dust which could not have existed had the car touched the water. Further, had the lower fin dipped, there would have been a sufficient collection of salt water in the bottom of the fin to clearly show proof. No salt water was found there.

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U P I

35. Q. Have you received any reports indicating voice contact with surfact craft?

A. No, in fact we have received no reports from surface craft of either visual, voice or radio contact. The vision was sufficiently good on that morning that it should have been seen by craft normally operating in that vicinity.

36. Q. With reference to the personnel in the L-8 on this particular morning, about how long have you known Lieutenant Cody?

A. I have been acquainted with Lieutenant Cody for a period of about one year. Lieutenant Cody has been under my command for the last six months.

37. Q. From your observation and contacts with Lieutenant Cody, what is your opinion concerning his ability as a pilot?

A. I definitely consider Lieutenant Cody to be one of the most capable pilots and one of the most able officers under my command. He has served as senior aviator of the Treasure Island Unit for considerable periods of time during the last six months. He has always displayed keen intelligence, unusually sound judgment and has my complete confidence. He was of a quiet, taciturn nature, in no way inclined to be excitable or to lose his head under pressure. I have witnessed his actions during hazardous operations and know that he reacts calmly, quickly and efficiently. My lack of concern for the safety of the ship during the period which it was unreported on the morning of August 16, was based entirely on my complete and utmost confidence in Lieutenant Cody's ability as a pilot to safely and correctly handle his ship. Lieutenant Cody was qualified as Naval Aviator (Airship) and designated on December 31, 1941. He has 758.3 hours of time as a pilot of non-rigid airships. He is particularly qualified in the L-type of ship and was particularly familiar with the L-8, since that is the ship which he normally had in his charge at Treasure Island. His flight log shows 393.7 hours in the L-type airship. Lieutenant Cody was completely familiar with the territory over which he was operating as he has been operating continuously on patrol over that area for the last six months.

38. Q. How long have you known Ensign Adams and what is your opinion concerning his experience and knowledge concerning the operation and maintenance of airships?

A. I have known Ensign C. E. Adams for approximately ten years during his service as an enlisted man and more recently as a warrant and commissioned officer. Ensign Adams was an able and competent man in his rate and most thoroughly experienced in airship maintenance and operation. As an enlisted man it was not possible for Adams to be a pilot. However, in company with a great many other of our airship enlisted men, he had wide experience in the control of non-rigid airships in flight. After receiving his commission, Adams expressed a desire to continue his associations with airships and eventually to be designated a Naval Aviator (Airship). I considered this most desirable considering him a splendid man for an N.A. He was flying as a passenger with Lieutenant Cody for the purpose of familiarizing himself with the various types of airships and operations, having just previously made several flights in the larger types of airships at Moffett Field. His flight log shows he has 2,281.5 hours of flying time in airships of all kinds.

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39. Q. Have you any opinion as to the cause of this accident?

A. No, sir. Nothing that I have been able to discover has given me any grounds to form a reasonable opinion as to the sequence of events, why the airship was abandoned, or what happened to the personnel. I can only reiterate my confidence in Lieutenant Cody and my continued confidence that his actions were well considered ones at the time.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board then, at 4:25 p.m., adjourned until 10:00 a.m. August 19, 1942.

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U. S. Naval Air Station,  
Moffett Field, California,  
Wednesday, August 19, 1942.

The board met at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) USNR, member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, USN (Ret), member and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Guthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), USNR, recorder.  
George F. Phillips, Junior, yeoman second class, V-6, USNR, reporter.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

The record of proceedings of the first day were read and approved. Lieutenant Commander George F. Watson was recalled to review his testimony.

The board then, at 11:45 a.m., took a recess until 1:30 p.m. at which time it reconvened in the board room, U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

Present: All the members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn in declared as follows.

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank and present station.

A. L. R. Ulrich, Ensign, USN., attached to and serving with 2P Squadron 32, Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. Where were you stationed on the morning of August 16, 1942?

A. I was attached to the Treasure Island unit of the Squadron ZP-32.

3. Q. How long had you been there?

A. I had been there three (3) days.

4. Q. Are you a qualified pilot?

A. Yes, I am.

5. Q. Where did you obtain your training?

A. I started training first of July, 1941, at Lakehurst, New Jersey, and I was qualified Naval Aviator (Airship) on the 30th. of January, 1942.

6. Q. During your recent tour of duty at Treasure Island, did you fly the L-8?

A. I flew it approximately three times and was scheduled for the next flight following that in which the accident occurred.

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7. Q. When did you last fly the L-8?

A. On the evening flight of the 15th of August, 1942, previous to the accident.

8. Q. Would you please state how the ship handled during that flight-- the length of the flight and any other pertinent information concerning that flight?

A. The length of the flight was approximately three and one-half (3½) hours and no difficulties were noted at that time with the exception of the 'phone jack on the pilot's side. It was defective in such a manner as to give the pilot the impression that the radio was working intermittently, though actually the radio was functioning properly, but a loose connection in the 'phone jack caused the pilot's ear phones to cut out. Lieutenant Cody was aware of this condition.

9. Q. On your flight in the L-8 on August 15, 1942, did you have any communication by radio with any shore stations?

A. Yes, sir.

10. Q. How were you certain that your messages got through?

A. The acknowledgment from Navy Treasure, repeating my message verbatim back to me was proof that they had received it.

11. Q. How many messages did you transmit from the L-8 on your flight of August 15, 1942?

A. Three (3) messages, sir.

12. Q. How many of these messages were acknowledge by the shore station?

A. Three (3), sir.

13. Q. All three?

A. Yes, sir.

14. Q. Then what would be your comment, Mr. Ulrich, on your last entry in the radio log (Exhibit 2), on that date?

A. I would say it was a misjudgment on my part of the actual condition of the radio equipment.

15. Q. Is it correct, then, to say that your entry was made as a result of not knowing about the condition of this jack?

A. Yes, Sir.

16. Q. Are you, then, satisfied that as far as transmission was concerned, your radio was functioning normally on that flight?

A. Yes, sir.

17. Q. Did you make a ceiling check of the ship on your flight of August 15?

A. No, sir.

18. Q. What was the weigh-off of the ship on this particular flight?

A. My flight of August 15.

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19. Q. Your flight of August 15.
- A. The ship was approximately 100 pounds heavy.
20. Q. At take-off.
- A. Yes, sir--at take off.
21. Q. Did you use the loud speaker on this flight?
- A. No, sir.
22. Q. Mr. Ulrich, were you present at the take-off of the L-8 from Treasure Island on the morning of Sunday, August 16, 1942?
- A. Yes, sir.
23. Q. In what capacity were you then acting?
- A. I acted as Ground Handling Officer.
24. Q. Could you state what was the static condition of the L-8 on this take-off.
- A. The static condition of the L-8 at take-off was approximately two hundred (200) pounds heavy.
25. Q. Was that normal?
- A. Yes, sir, that was normal for our operations.
26. Q. Who was aboard the L-8 at take-off on the morning of August 16, 1942?
- A. Lieutenant E. D. Cody and Ensign C. E. Adams.
27. Q. Who was acting as pilot?
- A. Lieutenant Cody, sir.
28. Q. Did you check the equipment prior to take-off?
- A. No, sir, it was customary for the pilot to check the equipment.
29. Q. Did you note how many parachutes, harnesses and life belts were aboard at take-off on this date?
- A. No, sir.
30. Q. Were you senior ground officer at Treasure Island on the morning of August 16, 1942?
- A. Yes, sir.
31. Q. I show you daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the non-rigid airship L-8 as of August 16, 1942. Can you identify this form?
- A. Yes, sir.
32. Q. Are you custodian of this form? (Exhibit 3).
- A. Yes, sir.

33. Q. What is it?

A. It is the daily non-rigid flight inspection form the L-8 uses, dated 8/16/42 and signed by Lieutenant Cody as the pilot accepting the aircraft for flight, also signed by the rigger and the mechanic who made the inspection of the airship as of that date. The rigger's name, signed on the form is Masey, G. K., and the mechanic's name, A. A. Schreiber.

(Daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the L-8 dated August 16, 1942, was submitted to the Board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 3".)

NOTE: The original form was returned to Squadron ZP 32 and a copy is appended hereto, marked "Exhibit 3."

34. Q. From an examination of this form (Exhibit 3) what does it show with reference to life jackets and parachutes on board the L-8 on the morning of the take-off on August 16.

A. This form (Exhibit 3) is marked "OK" for the items "put parachutes and life jackets aboard" and "see that life raft is aboard."

35. Q. Who signs this report (Exhibit 3) as to equipment aboard? Is that the function of the rigger?

A. Yes, sir.

36. Q. Is it his duty to ascertain if this equipment is aboard the ship?

A. Yes, sir.

37. Q. What is the normal procedure followed with reference to life jackets, parachutes, parachute harnesses and life raft, insofar as the L-8 is concerned.

A. They are left aboard the ship between flights.

38. Q. How many parachutes are normally carried?

A. Three parachutes.

39. Q. And life jackets?

A. Three life jackets.

40. Q. And life rafts?

A. One life raft.

41. Q. Parachute harnesses?

A. Three harnesses.

42. Q. Did you make the last flight previous to the flight of August 16?

A. Yes, sir.

43. Q. All equipment was aboard the ship when you landed?

A. All the equipment normally carried, which included three life jackets, three parachutes and harnesses and one life raft.

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44. Q. Was the Very pistol aboard?

A. Yes, sir.

45. Q. Was the machine gun aboard?

A. Yes, sir.

46. Q. Were the bombs attached?

A. Yes, sir.

47. Q. How many?

A. Two, sir.

48. Q. Was the dump tank full when you landed?

A. Yes, sir.

49. Q. Did you observe the weather conditions at take-off on the morning of August 16?

A. Yes, sir.

50. Q. Would you describe those?

A. The ceiling at the Gate appeared to be between 800 feet and 1000 feet.

51. Q. How did you estimate that ceiling?

A. By the amount of the bridge towers visible

52. Q. Of the Golden Gate Bridge?

A. Yes, sir.

53. Q. Were the tops of the towers in the clear.

A. Yes, sir.

54. Q. What was the approximate visibility at the time of the take-off?

A. I would say between three and five miles, sir.

55. Q. Do you remember the time of sunrise that morning?

A. No, sir.

56. Q. Was the cloud layer unbroken at take-off?

A. Yes, sir, it was completely overcast out toward the sea.

57. Q. Did you observe the actual take-off on the 16th?

A. Yes, sir.

58. Q. Was it in all respects normal?

A. Yes, sir.

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59. Q. Can you give the force and direction of the wind at take-off on the 16th?

A. The wind was light and variable, probably four knots from the Southeast.

60. Q. In what direction was the take-off?

A. Toward the Southeast.

61. Q. Was that toward the hill of Yerba Buena?

A. No, sir, it is toward the Ferry Slip, on the East side of the Island.

62. Q. Did the ship appear to have difficulty gaining altitude?

A. No, sir.

63. Q. Was this a taxi take-off.

A. Yes, sir.

64. Q. About what was the length of the take-off?

A. The length of the take-off run was approximately 250 yards.

65. Q. Did the engines function properly on the take off?

A. Yes, sir.

66. Q. How far did you observe the flight from the time of take-off.

A. Until it was approximately over the Golden Gate bridge.

67. Q. At what altitude would you estimate the L-8 cleared the bridge?

A. I did not see the ship go over the bridge, but approaching the Golden Gate bridge it was about five hundred to seven hundred feet high.

68. Q. Did you use the ship's battery to start the engines that morning?

A. I was not there at the time of starting the engines.

69. Q. Could you state who would know?

A. Schreiber, aviation machinist's mate, first class, should know the method of starting the engines that morning.

70. Q. Then your last observation of the ship was when she was entering the Golden Gate, seaward bound?

A. Yes, sir.

71. Q. Did you make a check after the ship took off on the flight August 16th to determine whether any of the equipment that was aboard the night of August 15th was left behind?

A. No check was made, sir, to my knowledge.

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72. Q. Were all the air valves and air dampers functioning properly during your flight of August 15?

A. Yes, sir.

73. Q. All instruments were functioning properly?

A. Yes, sir.

74. Q. What was the highest altitude on your flight of August 15?

A. One thousand feet, sir.

75. Q. What was the time of take-off on the flight of the L-8 on August 16?

A. 0603.

76. Q. Did you observe Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Adams shortly before the take-off on the morning of the 16th?

A. Yes, sir.

77. Q. Did they appear to be in good health and spirits?

A. Yes, sir.

78. Q. Did you observe the condition of the envelope prior to flight on August 16—that is, whether it was dry or wet?

A. No, sir.

79. Q. What was the weather condition during the evening of August 15 and the morning of August 16?

A. In the evening of August 15 the area in the vicinity of the Gate was clear, as was the Bay area. On the morning of the 16th, the area in the vicinity of Treasure Island was overcast.

80. Q. No precipitation?

A. No, sir.

81. Q. Was there a heavy dew?

A. No, sir.

82. Q. Is it common practice to wipe off the car prior to flight—the exterior of the car?

A. No, sir.

83. Q. Do you know whether this was done the morning of August 16?

A. Not to my knowledge, sir.

84. Q. I show you this form marked "daily non-rigid flight inspection form" and ask you if you can identify it.

A. Yes, sir.

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85. Q. Are you custodian of this form?

A. Yes, sir.

86. Q. What is it?

A. It is the daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the airship L-8 dated August 14, 1942, signed by I. Cushman, rigger and N. Zafranovich, mechanic and accepted by Ensign Sprague and Ensign Ulrich.

(Daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the L-8 dated August 14, 1942, was submitted to the board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 4.")

NOTE: The original form was returned to Squadron ZP 32 and a copy is appended hereto marked "Exhibit 4."

88. Q. I show you this form marked "daily non-rigid flight inspection form" and ask you if you can identify it.

A. Yes, sir.

89. Q. Are you custodian of this form?

A. Yes, sir.

90. Q. What is it?

A. This is the daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the airship L-8 dated 8/15/42, signed by I. Cushman, rigger and E. Brooks, mechanic, also signed and accepted for flight by Ensign Ulrich, Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Ulrich.

(Daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the L-8 dated August 15, 1942, was submitted to the Board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 5.")

NOTE: The original form was returned to Squadron ZP 32 and a copy is appended hereto marked "Exhibit 5."

91. Q. I show you this paper, entitled "Daily Weigh-off Sheet, ZP Squadron 32", dated August 14, 1942, and ask you if you can identify the same.

A. Yes, sir.

92. Q. Are you custodian of this form

A. Yes, sir.

93. Q. What is it?

A. It is the daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8 at Treasure Island dated August 14, 1942.

(Daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8, dated August 14, 1942, was submitted to the board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 6.")

NOTE: The original form was returned to Squadron ZP-32 and a copy is appended hereto marked "Exhibit 6."

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94. Q. I show you this paper, entitled "Daily Weigh-Off Sheet, ZP Squadron 32," dated August 15, 1942, and ask you if you can identify the same.

A. Yes, sir.

95. Q. Are you custodian of this form?

A. Yes, sir.

96. Q. What is it?

A. It is the daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8 at Treasure Island dated August 15, 1942.

(Daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8, dated August 15, 1942, was submitted to the board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 7".)

97. Q. I show you this paper, entitled "Daily Weigh-off Sheet, ZP Squadron 32", dated August 16, 1942, and ask you if you can identify the same.

A. Yes, sir.

98. Q. Are you custodian of this form?

A. Yes, sir.

99. Q. What is it?

A. It is the daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8 at Treasure Island dated August 16, 1942.

(Daily weigh-off sheet for the airship L-8, dated August 16, 1942, was submitted to the board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 8".)

NOTE: The original form was returned to Squadron ZP 32 and a copy is appended hereto marked "Exhibit 8."

100. Q. Is there any abnormal difference in weigh-off indicated on these three weigh-off sheets? (Exhibits 6, 7, and 8).

A. No, sir.

101. Q. Then there was apparently no abnormal loss of lifting gas during these three days.

A. No, there was no apparent loss of lifting gas.

102. Q. What are ZP-32's instructions on the common practice in case of engine failure in the air?

A. The common practice is left to the pilot of the airship and generally it is to ballast the airship to enable it to remain in the air while an attempt is made to start the engines. If the engines still could not be started, the common practice is to attempt to free balloon the airship to a safe landing.

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103. Q. Would you first notify, by radio, Wing Control or Moffett Field of this casualty before attempting to start your engine?

A. Before attempting to free balloon, sir, I would attempt to start the engines before notifying Wing Control or Navy Treasure.

104. Q. You would notify Wing Control and Moffett Field before exhausting your battery, though, would you not?

A. Yes, sir.

105. Q. Do you know the condition of the battery prior to the take-off of the ship on August 16?

A. No, sir.

106. Q. In your estimation, would it have been possible for a stowaway to have been aboard at take-off on the morning of August 16?

A. No, sir.

107. Q. What information have you as to the duration of the flight on August 16, of the L-8?

A. The L-8 should have landed between 1000 and 1030.

108. Q. Are there any squadron instructions with reference to any notification of estimated time of arrival and return of the L-8 from any flight?

A. The squadron order states that estimated time of arrival shall be reported to both Wing Control and Navy Treasure forty-five (45) minutes prior to that arrival time.

109. Q. Was the L-8 scheduled for another flight at that time?

A. Yes, sir, it was scheduled to take off at 1045.

110. Q. Could you explain the function and operation of the L-8 ship's door?

A. The door swings forward and out, similar to a car door, and, has an inside lock which is normally secured during flight. The inside lock is in addition to the latch.

111. Q. It would be impossible to open this door if the lock were secure.

A. Yes, sir, that's correct.

112. Q. At what time did you arrive at the final landing of the L-8 at Daly City?

A. It was about 1220, August 16, 1942.

113. Q. Did you observe the position of the door when you arrived on the scene of the accident?

A. The door was open when I arrived on the scene. There is a small catch on the side of the car that will hold it against the side of the car in a fully-open position. The door was hooked open in this position when I arrived on the scene.

C O P Y

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114. Q. Did the door lock function properly on this flight you made with the L-8 on August 15?

A. Yes, sir.

115. Q. Is the safety lock normally in a locked position after take-off?

A. Yes, sir, just prior to take-off it is always secured.

116. Q. From your experience can you think of any reason for opening this door during flight?

A. No, sir.

117. Q. In your opinion, Mr. Ulrich, would it be possible for the door to accidentally swing open and hook forward in the position you found it?

A. No, sir, not while the engines were running.

118. Q. Do you believe it is possible with the engines stopped and the ship having lost way?

A. That would almost have to be qualified, sir. It is possible but highly improbable.

119. Q. Did you observe whether or not the door was closed on take-off of the ship August 16?

A. Yes, sir. The door was closed.

120. Q. Mr. Ulrich, can you explain the procedure followed in ZP-32, at Treasure Island unit with reference to classified material, including restricted publications?

A. I sign to the Communications Officer, ZP-32, for the classified material used in our operations at Treasure Island. This was kept in the custody of the Duty Officer or the pilot and when not in use was kept locked in a locker for that purpose.

121. Q. Did you receipt for all of the classified material that was at the Treasure Island unit?

A. Yes, sir.

122. Q. Were they normally taken along on all flights?

A. They were always taken along.

123. Q. Did the pilot receipt for them at all?

A. No, sir.

124. Q. Have you made a check to determine if all classified material that you receipted for to the Communications Officer of ZP-32 have been returned.

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A. A. Yes, sir, they were all in the ship at the time of landing.

125. Q. How are they normally kept.

A. They are kept in a brief case.

126. Q. Did you see the brief case carried aboard?

A. No, sir, I did not but it was always carried into the ship by the pilot prior to take-off.

127. Q. When did you last check the contents of the brief case before the flight of August 16?

A. Prior to my flight on the evening of August 15. When I landed I turned them over to Mr. Cody.

128. Q. When did you last check the contents of the brief case?

A. At the scene of the accident, where the contents were intact in the brief case. This brief case was heavily weighted and standing instructions were that it would be thrown overboard in case of leaving the ship.

129. Q. Do you know whether or not the emergency engine tools were in the ship on your flight of August 15?

A. No, sir, I did not notice.

The Board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been full brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board, then, at 4:10 p.m., adjourned until 10:00 a.m. August 20, 1942.

COPY

U. S. Naval Air Station,  
Moffett Field, California,  
Thursday, August 20, 1942.

The board met at 10:00 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder.  
George F. Phillips, Jr., yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R., reporter.

The record of proceedings of the second day were read and approved.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

Ensign Ulrich was recalled to review his testimony.

Ensign Ulrich was recalled by the recorder for further questioning, and warned that the oath previously taken by him was still binding.

Examined by the recorder:

130. Q. Describe the location and operation of the Bogen loud speaker.

A. The microphone of the loud speaker was attached to several feet of cord and plugged into a controlling unit underneath the front seat on the starboard side of the airship. The control box on the right hand side had a dial and switch indicating "on", "stand-by" and "off" positions. On the left hand side of the control box was the control dial to vary the output of the loud speaker. The microphone and lead are normally coiled up and carried in the package compartment on the starboard side of the instrument panel not connected to the control box. To operate the Bogen loud speaker, the microphone with cord attached has to be removed from the package compartment and screwed on the control box. The operating switch is turned on to the "stand-by" position for about forty-five seconds. Thereafter the operating lever may be turned to the "on" position.

131. Q. How did you leave the Bogen loud speaker when you last used it?

A. I last used it on the morning flight of August 15 and left the microphone and cord plugged in to the control box and placed them in the package compartment. The operating switch was left at the "off" position.

132. Q. Did you have smoke identification bombs aboard the ship on your last flight of August 15?

A. I do not know.

133. Q. What is your practice in regards to removing movable equipment from the ship at the end of daily operations at Treasure Island?

A. To the best of my knowledge, the pyrotechnics and confidential folder were the items commonly taken out of the ship.

134. Q. The only items?

A. Well, yes, the only items removed from the ship at the end of the evening flight.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

C O P Y

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate and present station.

A. A. A. Schreiber, Aviation Machinists's Mate, second class, attached to and serving with Squadron ZP-32, U.S.N.

2. Q. Were you attached to the Treasure Island unit of ZP-32 from the 13th of August until the 16th of August 1942?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. Were you the mechanic in charge of the L-8 there?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. I show you this daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the non-rigid airship L-8 as of August 16, 1942, (Exhibit 3). Do you recognize this form?

A. Yes, sir.

5. Q. Did you sign your name at the bottom of this particular form?

A. Yes sir, I did.

6. Q. Would you state to the board what items on that form (Exhibit 3) are in your handwriting, if any?

A. All of those pertaining to engineering.

7. Q. Did you check all the items under "ENGINEERING" and the items under "BALLAST DATA," numbers 1 and 2?

A. Yes, sir.

8. Q. When did you make the inspection of the items listed on Exhibit 3 under "ENGINEERING?"

A. I made all those the night before except the one under "WARMING UP." That was made the next morning.

9. Q. Is that the usual procedure followed with reference to inspection of the L-8 at Treasure Island?

A. Yes, sir.

10. Q. This was following the last flight of August 15 and immediately prior to the flight of August 16?

A. Yes, sir.

11. Q. Did you find anything with reference to the propellers, engines, ignition, fuel and oil tanks and line and fire extinguisher that was not in order.

A. No, sir.

12. Q. On the morning of August 16, did you warm up the engines of the L-8?

A. Yes, sir.

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13. Q. Did you experience any difficulty in starting either engine?

A. No, sir.

14. Q. Did you start them with the battery that is in the L-8 or did you use a shore battery?

A. No, sir. I used the one in the ship.

15. Q. How many attempts were made to start the engines on this morning?

A. Only one attempt.

16. Q. They started the first time?

A. Yes, sir, they both started the first attempt.

17. Q. Approximately how long before the L-8 took off on the morning of the 16th did you start the engines?

A. Approximately fifteen minutes.

18. Q. Did you note whether the generator was charging?

A. Yes, sir, the generator was charging.

19. Q. Did the engines run continuously from the time of starting until take-off.

A. Yes, sir.

20. Q. And where did you remain during the period from the time you started the engines until take-off?

A. I remained in the pilot's seat until Lieutenant Cody came aboard.

21. Q. Did anyone else come aboard with Lieutenant Cody?

A. Yes, sir, Mr. Adams.

22. Q. Anyone else?

A. There might have been, but they were the only ones I noticed.

23. Q. During the period between the time you started the engines and the time Mr. Cody entered the car, was there anyone other than Mr. Cody and Mr. Adams in the car?

A. Yes, sir, there were several people in the car but only one that I know positively was there and that was Mazey, the rigger. He brought this inspection form and had his part of it filled out and while I was sitting there I filled out my part of it and signed it.

24. Q. Did you check all of the instruments on the instrument panel?

A. Yes, sir.

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25. Q. And they were all apparently in good working order.

A. Yes, sir.

26. Q. Did you happen to notice whether the microphone cord and microphone were attached to the Bogen loud speaker underneath the co-pilot's seat?

A. No, sir, it was not attached.

27. Q. Do you know anything about the position of the microphone cord and microphone the night before.

A. The night before, while I was on watch, they were in the glove compartment.

28. Q. On the night before do you know whether the microphone and cord were disconnected and in the glove compartment.

A. Yes, sir, but I could not be sure whether this condition was the same the morning of the take-off on the 16th.

29. Q. Did you notice anything unusual concerning either Lieutenant Cody or Ensign Adams on the morning of the 16th.

A. No, sir, I didn't.

30. Q. They appeared to be in good spirits and health?

A. Yes, sir.

31. Q. How much gas was in the L-8 on the morning of the 16th?

A. Approximately 125 gallons.

32. Q. How do you know that there were 125 gallons.

A. I know there were approximately 125 gallons because I filled both side tanks until they overflowed and they both hold 50 gallons each and in the center tank I put approximately 15 gallons. These were approximately 10 left from the night before in the center tank and we pumped gas in from five-gallon cans so I know it was there.

33. Q. When did you put the gas in the tanks?

A. I put it in the night before, after the last flight on August 15.

34. Q. Did you check the gas again?

A. Yes sir, I checked all the gauges just before the take-off on August 16, the two on the instrument panel, for the two side tanks and also the gauges under all three tanks. According to the gauges the side tanks were full and the center tank had about 25 gallons.

35. Q. Was the dump tank full?

A. Yes, sir.

36. Q. How many gallons?

A. Fifty gallons.

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37. Q. Did you examine all gas lines to see whether or not there was any leakage?

A. Yes, sir.

38. Q. Was there any leakage?

A. No, sir.

39. Q. Did you put any oil in the engines?

A. Yes, sir, I put about one-half gallon in each engine tank.

40. Q. Did you check the ignition system?

A. Yes, sir.

41. Q. Normal?

A. Yes, sir.

42. Q. Did you observe anything out of the ordinary with reference to the engines' ignition system or any other part of the ship for which you were responsible?

A. No, sir, everything was normal.

43. Q. Could you state at which speed the engines of the L-8 idled that morning?

A. They idled at about 350 r.p.m.

44. Q. Was that sufficient to insure against stalling?

A. Yes, sir.

45. Q. What was the condition of the battery?

A. The battery seemed to be fully charged because it kicked the engines over the first attempt. There was no trouble there.

46. Q. How many starts do you think that battery would give, without recharging?

A. I would say five or six—that is, one after the other.

47. Q. Five or six for both engines?

A. No, sir. Five or six starts—that is not on both engines but on either engine in succession without giving the battery time to build up.

48. Q. When Lieutenant Cody relieved you, what fuel valves were turned on.

A. When Mr. Cody relieved me the engines were idling and the center fuel tank was turned on.

49. Q. Both engines running?

A. Yes, sir, both at idling speed.

50. Q. Did you fly with Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Adams on the noon flight of the L-8 on August 15, 1942.

A. Yes, sir, I did.

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51. Q. Approximately how long was the flight you took with Lieutenant Cody and Ensign Adams on the 15th?

A. It was about three hours and fifty minutes.

52. Q. During that time did either Lieutenant Cody or Ensign Adams don a life jacket or parachute harness?

A. No, sir.

53. Q. Did both officers fly the ship during that flight?

A. Yes, sir.

54. Q. Did you notice anything abnormal in the handling of the ship by either officer?

A. No, sir, I did not.

55. Q. Did you notice any friction or discord between either of the officers.

A. No, sir.

56. Q. Then from all appearances, you observed, it was merely a routine flight?

A. Yes, sir, they seemed to be on friendly terms.

57. Q. Did you make a ceiling check on this flight?

A. Yes, sir.

58. Q. Do you remember what the pressure height was?

A. Yes, sir--twenty-three hundred feet.

59. Q. Did you make a taxi take-off on this flight?

A. Yes, sir, we did.

60. Q. Do you know the static condition of the ship--the weigh-off, rather?

A. I believe it was about two men heavy because Mr. Cody started to take off with only himself and Mr. Adams and then decided to take another man so I took the flight.

61. Q. It was two hundred pounds heavy with your weight on board?

A. Yes, sir, approximately, because it was not very heavy at all without my weight.

62. Q. What member of the crew is responsible for shifting the source of fuel supply to the engine when the tank being used is about to run dry?

A. That's the mechanic's job, if there is one on board.

63. Q. Have you ever been on a flight during which the engines stopped because of failure to shift tanks before the tank being used ran dry?

A. No sir.

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64. Q. Have you ever observed what is commonly known as an air-lock in the fuel system on the L-8?

A. No, sir.

65. Q. Approximately how many flights and how much time have you had aboard non-rigid airships since reporting to duty with the 2P Squadron 32?

A. I believe about 100 hours or 150 hours.

66. Q. Approximately how many flights?

A. I would say a rough guess--18 to 20 flights.

67. Q. What engine tools are carried aboard the L-8?

A. I do not know definitely. There were a few odd tools in the glove compartment but there was no regular kit.

68. Q. Is there not an emergency kit in the after compartment of the car?

A. Yes, sir, there is one there that carried a screw driver, a crescent wrench and, I believe, a pair of pliers.

69. Q. When did you last examine this emergency kit in the after end of the car?

A. That, I believe, was the time it was here in the hangar before it went to Treasure Island.

70. Q. Do you know what was in the kit at that time?

A. I do not know if anything was there, but there were some odd tools in the glove compartment and those are the only ones I am sure of.

71. Q. Did you go to the scene of the deflation and landing of the L-8 on August 16?

A. Yes, sir, I did.

72. Q. About what time did you arrive there?

A. I believe that was between 1200 and 1230.

73. Q. Did you examine the interior of the car of the L-8?

A. No, sir, not the entire interior--only the after end where the fuel tanks were.

74. Q. What did you observe with reference to the fuel tanks and gauges?

A. I noticed that the center tank and the starboard tank were both turned on and I believe the gauge on the center tank read about forty gallons but at the angle the ship was lying then, the gauge would not be correct, and at that position I believe the gauge would read less than the tank actually held.

75. Q. Normally would both these valves be turned on?

A. No, sir, unless there was very little gas in either one of them. When the mechanic was flying, I think the way it was done was that he usually turned the center tank off when it got down to about ten gallons and switched to the side tank.

76. Q. Which side tank?

A. Usually the starboard one and when this tank got down to about ten or fifteen gallons the center tank was also turned on allowing all the gas from the side tank to drain to the center tank. In that way there would be no danger of the engines stopping by having to drain too much of the gas out. In this manner we could drain both tanks completely without any danger of the engines stopping.

77. Q. If only one tank was turned on at departure of the ship, which tank was turned on?

A. The center tank was turned on.

78. Q. With one full and one empty tank both turned on, would you be likely to have an engine failure?

A. No, sir.

79. Q. Can this starboard tank valve be turned on from the shock of landing?

A. In my estimation that could not happen, because they were fairly snug.

80. Q. You have testified that you found the center tank and starboard tank fuel valves turned on. Was this a normal operating condition of these valves?

A. No, sir, not when there was any amount of gas in the two tanks. That is, when there were anywhere near fifty gallons in both, combined. Because if there were more than fifty gallons in two tanks the side tank would drain into the center tank and when it was full it would go through the overflow.

81. Q. Do you know of any occasions in which water in the fuel has caused engine failure?

A. Yes, sir, one time at Treasure Island.

82. Q. How recently?

A. That was, I believe, about three months ago.

83. Q. Did you strain the gas prior to pumping it into the ship?

A. No, sir, we had not been straining gas we had up there then.

84. Q. Since that stoppage due to water, has the method of supplying fuel been changed?

A. Yes, sir. Instead of getting it from the Section Base gas station, we get it from the Standard Oil Company in San Francisco.

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85. Q. Has any water trouble been experienced since that change?

A. No, sir.

86. Q. After the accident, when the car was brought to even keel, did you determine how much gas was in the starboard tank?

A. No, sir, myself, I did not look at it. I got my information from Mr. Sprague.

87. Q. Can you testify as to the condition of gas tanks, gas lines, and oil leads from your examination of the ship?

A. No, sir, I did not make a close inspection of them.

88. Q. Did you see any evidence of leaking gas?

A. Yes, sir. There was gas on the street but from what from what the firemen said, the dump tank was accidentally pulled and no one knew anything about it.

89. Q. Did you note any odor of gas in the car?

A. No, sir, I did not but I did notice an odor of gasoline on the street. There was evidence of gasoline having been dumped.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board then, at 12:18 p.m., took a recess until 1:30 p.m. at which time it reconvened in the board room at the U. S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

Present: All the members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Will you please state your name, rate and present station?

A. William Flounoy Royal, Junior, aviation ordnanceman third class, attached to and serving with ZP Squadron 32.

2. Q. Were you stationed at Treasure Island from the 13th of August until the 16th of August, 1942?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. And were you in charge of all ordnance of the Treasure Island unit of Squadron ZP-32?

A. Yes, sir.

C O P Y

4. Q. On the morning of August 16, 1942, can you tell us what armament was aboard when the L-8 took off?

A. Yes, sir.

5. Q. Would you give us a complete statement of all?

A. She had two bombs, Mark 17, one machine gun, Browning, 30 calibre, approximately 300 rounds of ammunition, five Mark four float lights and seventeen projectile cartridges and one projector, M-2. I believe that is all.

6. Q. Did you actually check all of the equipment and arament you mentioned on the morning of the 16th of August, 1942, before the L-8 took off?

A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. And you are certain it was all present?

A. Yes, sir.

8. Q. Did you have occasion to ascertain, after the L-8 landed in Daly City, whether any of these items were missing?

A. I checked everything except the float lights there and then was ordered to search for the missing bomb.

9. Q. And you found everything aboard the L-8 with the exception of the float lights which you did not check?

A. That's right, sir.

10. Q. Where was this equipment normally kept in the car of the L-8?

A. There is a sling attached to the frames overhead and the machine gun was slung in it. Approximately in the center frame of the cabin. The float lights were located in a pocket of the seat behind the pilot. The Ammunition was in three magazines and was sitting on the deck behind the rear seat. The projector and projectile cartridges were in a wooden box beside the ammunition and the bombs were attached to the racks. That covers all of it, I guess.

11. Q. Were these float lights all the same?

A. Yes, sir--Mark four.

12. Q. Were they of different colors?

A. No, sir. They were all light tan.

13. Q. Will you describe the appearance of these lights after striking the water?

A. After striking the water they give off a black smoke and a flame that lasts from two and one-half (2½) minutes to five (5) minutes.

14. Q. Do you know whether, after the accident on August 16, any inventory has been taken to determine whether any of the float lights issued to Treasure Island unit of Squadron ZP-32 were missing?

A. Yes, sir, I made an inventory.

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15. Q. What was the result of that inventory?

A. Two float lights were missing.

16. Q. Did you report this to anyone?

A. Yes, sir. I reported it to Lieutenant Burfield, Gunnery Officer of the Squadron.

17. Q. Did you return any float lights to the armory?

A. Yes, sir.

18. Q. How many?

A. Three (3), sir.

19. Q. When?

A. Monday afternoon, I believe, sir.

20. Q. Monday afternoon. Where did you get those three?

A. From the Treasure Island unit light truck which brought back the equipment from the accident.

21. Q. During the time that you were in the car of the L-8 on the morning of August 16, prior to flight, did you happen to observe whether the microphone and cord were attached to the loud speaker unit?

A. Yes, sir.

22. Q. And was it attached?

A. Yes, sir, it was.

23. Q. And where was the microphone?

A. The microphone was lying in the compartment at the right hand side of the instrument panel.

24. Q. Was the door to the compartment open or closed?

A. Open, sir.

25. Q. When were you aboard the ship—what time was it?

A. Just before flight, sir, just checked my ordnance gear and glanced at the pressure and happened to notice the door was open and the microphone was laying inside.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, and was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

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Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate and present station.

A. George Kenneth Mazey, coxswain, U.S.N., attached to and serving with Squadron ZP-32 at Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. Were you attached to the Treasure Island unit of ZP-32 from the 13th of August to the 16th of August, 1942?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. Were you present on the morning of August 16 when the L-8 took off?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. I show you the daily non-rigid flight inspection form for the non-rigid airship L-8 as of August 16, 1942, (Exhibit 3). Do you recognize it?

A. Yes, sir.

5. Q. Referring to that form (Exhibit 3) could you tell me what writing, if any, you put on the form?

A. All the items that come under the riggers.

6. Q. Specifically with reference to parachutes, could you tell me how many parachutes were aboard on August 16?

A. Three parachutes and four harnesses.

7. Q. Were there any life jackets?

A. Also three life jackets in the ship.

8. Q. Also life raft?

A. Yes, sir.

9. Q. Where was this life raft?

A. On the starboard side, up forward, sir, in the car.

10. Q. Did you go to the scene of deflation and landing of the L-8 in Daly City?

A. Yes, sir.

11. Q. What time did you arrive there?

A. About 12 o'clock.

12. Q. Did you check to see whether any of the equipment you just listed was present?

A. Yes, sir, I did, but there were two other men ahead of me in the car and they started unpacking.

13. Q. Do you know, of your own knowledge, how much of the equipment aboard at the time of take-off was still aboard?

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-36-

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A. Yes, sir.

A. Yes, sir.

A. Yes, there were three (3).

A. That was all we could find in the car.

A. All movable equipment was removed from the car and I received only three float lights.

A. Yes, sir.

A. Yes sir, everything that could possibly be checked out there was.

A. The reason for that was, sir, that I had it in a folder and the clip was on top of it and was folded back over the sheet and I could not write on it.

A. Yes, sir.

A. I do.

A. All but two, sir.

A. The total amount of fuel and free lift. That was written in afterward.

26. Q. You will note that the bombs weigh 650 pounds, other armament 60 pounds and total is listed as 810 pounds. Is that correct?

A. No, sir. There is a mistake in addition, sir.

27. Q. And the total should be?

A. 710, sir.

28. Q. Had you noticed any abnormal static conditions in the weigh-off during the three days from August 13 to August 16, 1942, that the ship was at Treasure Island?

A. No, sir, I did not.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate and present station.

A. James Riley Hill, Aviation Machinist's Mate, third class, USN, with ZP 32.

2. Q. Were you attached to the Treasure Island Unit of Squadron ZP-32 from August 13 to August 16, 1942?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. Were you on the flight list on the morning of August 16?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. For what flight?

A. The morning flight--the first one.

5. Q. Which left about?

A. About six o'clock.

6. Q. Did you enter the car to go on that flight?

A. Yes, sir, I entered the car with full intentions of making the flight.

7. Q. Who was aboard when you entered?

A. The fellow who was warming the engines.

- 16 U P Y
8. Q. The mechanic who was warming the engines, you say?  
A. Yes, sir.
9. Q. An officer?  
A. No, sir, an enlisted man.
10. Q. Who boarded the ship then?  
A. First Mr. Cody and then Mr. Adams.
11. Q. Was Mr. Cody carrying anything?  
A. Yes, sir. The confidential papers in the leather brief case.
12. Q. Then there were just three persons in the car, Lieutenant Cody, Ensign Adams and you?  
A. At what time?
13. Q. Just prior to the take-off.  
A. Yes, sir.
14. Q. What conversation, if any, did you have with Lieutenant Cody?  
A. "Good morning, sir"-- "Good morning, Hill", then we took the ship off the mast and started pushing it down the field and then Lieutenant Cody told me to get out. I do not remember whether they weighed the ship off before he told me to get out or not.
15. Q. Lieutenant Cody did tell you to get out?  
A. Yes, sir.
16. Q. Did he give any reason?  
A. He did not say.
17. Q. What did you do then when Lieutenant Cody advised he was not going to take you?  
A. I unlocked the door, turned the handle and stepped out and shut the door. From then on I was a member of the car party.
18. Q. Did you see anyone lock the door from the inside after you got out?  
A. No, sir.
19. Q. Were you in a position to observe if anyone had attempted to lock the door?  
A. Yes, sir.
20. Q. Do you feel certain that from the time you left the car to the take-off the door was not locked from the inside?  
A. No, sir, I think the door was not locked.
21. Q. Did you close the door?  
A. Yes, sir.
22. Q. Did you go to the scene of the deflation and landing of the L-8 at Daly City, August 16th.  
A. Yes, sir.
23. Q. About what time did you arrive there?  
A. I do not know. I would say twelve o'clock.
24. Q. About twelve o'clock?  
A. Yes, sir, about 12 o'clock.

G-39  
C O P Y

25. Q. And did you enter the car?  
A. Yes, sir.
26. Q. Was there anyone in the car when you entered?  
A. No, sir.
27. Q. So far as you know you were the first Naval personnel that entered the car of the L-8?  
A. I know I was the first one of the Treasure Island unit to enter the car.
28. Q. How about the Air Station?  
A. We were there first.
29. Q. Did the Treasure Island unit arrive at the scene of accident prior to the Moffett Field Group?  
A. Yes, sir.
30. Q. Did you observe the switches?  
A. Yes, sir.
31. Q. In what condition were they?  
A. They were in the position of "on."
32. Q. Both the ignition switches were on?  
A. Yes, sir.
33. Q. Did you notice the radio control?  
A. There are three positions on the radio receiving switch and they were on.
34. Q. Where was the microphone of the radio?  
A. In the regular position, mounted on the dashboard.
35. Q. Where were the receivers--head 'phones?  
A. They were plugged in. I do not know whether they were hanging in the hooks or hanging down.
36. Q. Did you note the condition of the loud speaker set?  
A. It was plugged in.
37. Q. The microphone was plugged in?  
A. Yes, sir.
38. Q. And did you notice where the microphone was?  
A. Yes, sir, it was hanging out the door when we got there.
39. Q. The door was open when you arrived?  
A. Yes, sir.
40. Q. Latched back and open?  
A. Yes, sir.
41. Q. The microphone was hanging out the door?  
A. Yes, sir.
42. Q. About how far below the doorsill?  
A. Two feet, I guess--three feet--not much more than that because the cord is not much longer.

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C O P Y

43. Q. Was the cord fully extended.  
A. Yes, sir.

44. Q. Did you notice which gas tanks were turned on?  
A. No, sir.

45. Q. Did you help remove the movable equipment in the car?  
A. Yes, sir.

46. Q. Do you know how many float lights were removed?  
A. No, sir.

47. Q. Did you remove the parachutes?  
A. No sir, I did not.

48. Q. What equipment did you remove?  
A. The microphone, the head 'phones and I remember handing out two float lights.

49. Q. Do you know whether there were any float lights remaining?  
A. By that time Nick Zafranovich was in the car with me and we were handing things out as fast as the officers on the street could take them. I handed the confidential papers in the brief case out to Mr. Sprague.

50. Q. Where was the brief case in the ship?  
A. It was lying against the front legs of the chair directly behind the pilot's seat, just the same position that the brief case was in when I got out of the ship that morning.

51. Q. Did you notice anything unusual about either Lieutenant Cody or Ensign Adams prior to take-off that morning?

A. No, sir.

52. Q. They seemed to be in normal good health and spirits?  
A. Yes sir.

53. Q. Did the ship make a taxi take-off the morning of the 16th?  
A. Yes, sir.

54. Q. Did you take a weigh-off just prior to take-off?

A. Yes, sir. After I got out of the ship they took a weigh-off.

55. Q. about how heavy was the ship?  
A. 175 to 200 pounds heavy—it took two men to lift it.

56. Q. Any equipment taken off the ship after the weigh-off?  
A. No, sir.

57. Q. Did you observe whether, prior to the time of your getting out of the ship, either Lieutenant Cody or Ensign Adams put their life jackets on?

A. No, sir, they did not put them on.

C O P Y

58. Q. Where were their life jackets?

A. Located in specially provided pockets just back of the pilot's seat on the port side of the car.

59. Q. Did you notice whether these were missing when you were aboard the ship at Daly City.

A. Yes, sir, there were two life jackets missing.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board, then, at 4:38 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m., August 21, 1942.

COPY



U. S. Naval Air Station,  
Moffett Field, California,  
Friday, August 20, 1942.

The board convened at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder.  
George F. Phillips, Junior, yeoman second class, V-6, USNR, reporter.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. What is your name?  
A. A. Backman.

2. Q. And your home address?  
A. 728 11th Street, San Pedro, California. I am Master of the S. S. Daisy Gray.

3. Q. Where is the S. S. Daisy Gray?  
A. Bethlehem Shipyards, Alameda.

4. Q. How long has she been there?  
A. Arrived Sunday noon, about 11:45.

5. Q. From where?  
A. From San Diego.

6. Q. could you trace your approximate course from 7 a.m. on Sunday August 16?  
A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. On the morning of Sunday, August 16, what was the approximate position of your ship?  
A. At 6:58 at buoy A, entrance buoy.

8. Q. Entering San Francisco?  
A. Yes, sir.

9. Q. At 6:58 you passed south of entrance buoy A?  
A. Yes.

10. Q. Is this information from your ship's log?  
A. Yes, from the log. We passed buoy B at 7:06, buoy C at 7:19, buoy D at 7:30, buoy E at 7:38, buoy F at 7:47, buoy G at 7:59, buoy H at 8:08, buoy I at 8:17 and buoy J at 8:31.

11. Q. Were you standing in the dredge channel?

A. Yes. There, we contacted the guard boat outside there between "I" and "J" buoys at about 8:20.

C O P Y

12. Q. Did you sight an airship?  
A. Yes, I did. I saw him coming from the east from the entrance. Must have been around 7:30.
13. Q. What were the weather conditions.  
A. It was very nice and clear, smooth sea and really nice and very little wind. The wind was from the north.
14. Q. The sea was very smooth and there was a light wind?  
A. There was a light breeze from the north.
15. Q. What would you estimate the visibility was at that time?  
A. We could see the heads.
16. Q. Could you see the harbor entrance?  
A. Yes.
17. Q. Could you see the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge.  
A. Yes
18. Q. Was it overcast?  
A. Kind of overcast. The sky was not really clear but I won't say that it was. It was kind of hazy. A high overcast.
19. Q. You first sighted the airship headed out about 7:30?  
A. I am not sure. After he passed us one of my men says "come over here. Look at that smoke down in the water."
20. Q. You were below deck?  
A. After sighting the dirigible I went below to my quarters to shave and I came out again. I was not down there more than 5 or 10 minutes and then later I came on deck and was on the starboard side with the lookout, and he said "look at that smoke over there."
21. Q. About that time the lookout reported what?  
A. He says, "come over here. Something funny. Smoke on the water of some sort."
22. Q. What direction and time was this?  
A. As close as I can remember, it was a little before eight o'clock - ten or fifteen minutes before.
23. Q. Did you sight the smoke on the water personally?  
A. Yes, another two or three minutes later.
24. Q. Was it on the port or starboard?  
A. Port. These smokes were on our port side, about one mile off
25. Q. Could you describe the appearance of this smoke?  
A. AT first I saw smoke close to the water, first one, then another spot, about one mile on the port beam.
26. Q. After passing these smokes, you saw some flame?  
A. When these objects were abaft the beam, the wind blew the smoke clear from the flame. Some flame was seen on the water.
27. Q. These objects were near buoy F?  
A. Yes, sir, we passed buoy F at 7:47.
28. Q. Where was the airship at this time?  
A. The airship at this time was directly over the smoke.

COPY

29. Q. What was her heading at that time?  
A. I think he was pretty close toward the wind.
30. Q. Into the wind?  
A. Almost, sir.
31. Q. Northeast, then?  
A. Yes, about Northeast. Between Northeast and North.
32. Q. How high would you estimate the airship was?  
A. about as high as the Golden Gate Bridge towers.
33. Q. Can you describe the movements of the airship from that time on?  
A. The airship was then astern of us and I believe heading south.
34. Q. Did the airship change altitude?  
A. He was higher when I first saw him.
35. Q. Did you, at any time, see the airship descend close to the water?  
A. No.
36. Q. Was anything else visible on the surface of the water about this time?  
A. No, I would not say anything else. I was using the glasses to see if I could find anything. I saw the door was closed and everything looked to be okay.
37. Q. Did you observe the smoke bombs and airship through your binoculars?  
A. Yes.
38. Q. Did you see any objects on the water other than the smoke bombs?  
A. No.
39. Q. Were there any other vessels in that immediate vicinity?  
A. There was a steamer that came in ahead of us. This ship had just passed us on the port side.
40. Q. About what time?  
A. She was overtaking us slowly and was just a little ahead when we sighted the smoke bombs.
41. Q. Could you identify this ship?  
A. Yes.
42. Q. You did not get her name?  
A. No, sir.  
did
43. Q. When/you last observe the airship?  
A. I do not remember exactly--perhaps not over one-half hour. The last time I saw her she was headed southward.
44. Q. Did the airship appear to be under control when you observed it?  
A. When he came down he had the engines going. That was just before we saw the smoke.
45. Q. Did he circle you?  
A. No, but he came down and turned around.

COPY

46. Q. Before, or after you saw the smoke?  
A. Before and after. About the time I saw the smoke bombs the airship seemed to be under control and her engines were both going and it would appear that his engines were carrying him into the wind. I could hear his engines. The airship appeared to be in normal condition.

47. Q. Did you notice anything dropped from the airship?  
A. No.

48. Q. And were you able to see anyone in the airship?  
A. No.

49. Q. Did you observe whether the door of the cabin was open.  
A. I did not notice that, no.

50. Q. Do you think you would have noticed it if the door had been open?  
A. Yes, I think so.

51. Q. Did you see both sides of the car.  
A. No, just the one side.

52. Q. Did you observe the starboard side of the car?  
A. Yes, sir, the starboard side, and I believe if a door had been opened I would have noticed it because I was looking through my glasses for any signs of distress. There were a number of fishing boats came in about noon which he must have passed earlier.

53. Q. You were able to see everything in that immediate vicinity through your binoculars so if there had been another object in the water you would have been able to see it?

A. Yes, the water was smooth and I would have been able to see anything around there. The flag was flying on the airship and everything seemed to be in good shape.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Would you state your name, please?  
A. Cyrus L. Brown.

2. Q. Home address?  
A. 1416 Hawthorne Terrace, Berkeley, California.

3. Q. Present occupation?  
A. Master of the steamship Albert Galatin.

4. Q. Where was the Albert Galatin during the period from 6:30 to 11 o'clock on the morning of August 16, 1942?

A. At 6:58, we were at buoy A, approaching the San Francisco harbor, inbound.

5. Q. Have you the approximate time of passing buoy A?  
A. 6:58 a.m. P.W.T.

6. Q. On which side did you pass?  
A. The starboard side.

7. Q. Could you give us the approximate times of passing the other buoys?

(The witness refreshed his memory by referring to the log of the Albert Galatin for August 16, 1942)

A. These are our log entries here.

8. Q. Captain, will you quote from your log on the four to eight watch of August 16, 1942?

A. "7:42, general alarm sounded. 7:42, submarine signal dropped by U. S. Navy blimp, meaning 'a submarine is below me'. Advanced at forced speed. All guns manned. Overcast, light breeze, slight sea. We were approaching the station ship at 8:27. Pilot Barker was aboard. 9:17, entered harbor. 9:45, revenue official aboard to inspect. 9:57 revenue official away.

9. Q. Were you on deck the morning of the 16th of August?

A. Yes, sir. On the flying bridge.

10. Q. Would you tell us what you observed yourself? Did you sight an airship about this time?

A. I did.

11. Q. Could you give the approximate time of sighting her and describe her movements?

A. Approximately seven o'clock, sir, when we were at buoy A. The airship was then standing out from shore, across the main channel, about the middle of the dredged channel. I would judge about one thousand feet high. He maneuvered northwest of the channel, then he crossed directly over us, heading in a southeasterly direction, about six hundred feet high. He then turned and passed directly over us again; this time at an estimated altitude of four hundred feet.

12. Q. Did you observe whether his engines were running?

A. I did not, but they must have been because he certainly was not acting out of the ordinary.

13. Q. Did you see both sides of the airship's car?

A. Yes, as he passed one way and as he passed the other way.

14. Q. Did you note whether the door of the car was open?

A. No, sir, I did not.

15. Q. Had it been open you believe you would have seen it?

A. Yes sir. The second time he passed over us he was about four hundred feet high.

16. Q. Did you see anything on the water during this period?

A. We got the signal from the station ship to stop immediately. Then when I looked around I saw a smoke streak right on the water and I could see fire occasionally. Then is when we sounded the general alarm. The smoke was approximately four hundred yards on our port bow. That was at 7:42. The airship was coming down over the smoke. He came down to what I should judge to be thirty feet from the water's surface. That is what I could not understand. I attributed that to the fact we had been having whales and I figured he was having a drill with these fish and was coming down to see what he had done. He came down, as I say, about thirty feet from the water, and then he gradually rose and after that I never saw him again. We went ahead and I never looked at him any more.

17. Q. Would you please summarize your observations of the airship?  
A. At about seven o'clock I observed the ship standing out from the Golden Gate. The airship proceeded in a northwesterly direction as we were standing in toward San Francisco at eleven knots. At the buoy F, at about 7:42, we observed a smoke bomb four points on our port bow, distance approximately four hundred yards. The airship, at that time, was circling somewhat to the north and east of the smoke bomb at approximately eight hundred feet. Then as we came on, the airship turned and headed southeast, passing directly over us at about six hundred feet, then circled about one mile to the south of us, returning directly over us at about four hundred feet. Then we ceased observing the airship because we were busy picking up a pilot and when I looked around to see what had happened to him at about 8:15 he was approaching the smoke bombs from the southeast at approximately thirty feet above the water. As he dropped low to the water, he was then two or three miles astern. He then rose gradually to about one hundred fifty (150) feet, which was the last I saw of him. When we looked back about five minutes later he was not in sight and we failed to see him thereafter, although we looked for him all the way in to San Francisco. He rose vertically apparently on an even keel although still having some forward motion. He seemed, however, to be completely under control. The bag was apparently fully inflated.

18. Q. Did you observe him through your binoculars?  
A. Yes.

19. Q. Did you see anyone in the cabin?  
A. No.

20. Q. Did you see anything dropped from the ship?  
A. I observed him through my binoculars but failed to notice anyone in the car and did not see anything dropped from the ship.

21. Q. Did you observe the area immediately in the vicinity of the smoke bombs?  
A. Yes.

22. Q. Did you notice anything in the water?  
A. No, sir. Nothing in the vicinity of the smoke bomb. There were, however, a couple of black-fish in sight.

23. Q. If there had been a man in the water at that time in that immediate vicinity, would you have been able to have seen him?

A. I would Yes.

24. Q. Was the sky completely overcast.  
A. No, sir. It was broken.

25. Q. Could you estimate the height of those clouds?  
A. I should say twenty-five hundred feet (2500). This, however, is a rough guess. That's about all, except when he came down I figured he was having a drill. Since I have been frequently convoyed by airships, I think I would have noticed anything unusual about this ship's movements.

26. Q. What line are you operating with?  
A. American Hawaiian Steamship Company.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness called by the recorder entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. What is your name?

A. Oscar Hammersteen.

2. Q. What is your present address?

A. 41 Colonial Way, San Francisco, California.

3. Q. What is your present occupation?

A. First mate on the Daisy Gray.

4. Q. Were you aboard the Daisy Gray on the morning of August 16, 1942, when she was inbound, between the hours of 6:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.?

A. Yes.

5. Q. Did you observe a dirigible or airship during that period of time.

A. Oh, yes.

6. Q. When did you first see it?

A. It was a little after seven. She was just going between the liberty ship and us.

7. Q. The Albert Galatin?

A. Yes.

8. Q. What was the approximate position of the airship at that time?

A. She was inbound, around northeast, and was following the same course we were for a while--the same as it would do in a convoy. We were just about at F buoy when we discovered this smoke bomb and the light at the same time. I called the Captain. The airship went right over us and stood close to the bomb. She was about three hundred (300) feet. I could see the "U.S. Navy." Then we discovered the other bomb a couple of points abaft of us. Then she went over there where that bomb was smoking. She went pretty close to the first bomb, then went over to the other bomb. The first one was about four points off F buoy.

9. Q. Did you see the airship drop anything?

A. No.

10. Q. Did you see her approach the water?

A. No, I should think three hundred feet was about the closest she got to the water. I could see the car and the flag and the "U.S. Navy" sign. I heard the motors howling when she went over.

11. Q. You heard the motors?

A. Yes.

12. Q. Did you see both sides of the car?

A. Oh, yes.

13. Q. Did you notice whether a door was open?

A. No, I did not see any door open.

14. Q. You did not see anything dropped from it?

A. No.

U U I I  
15. Q. Did you see anything else on the water besides the smoke bombs?

A. No.

16. Q. Had there been a man on the water could you have seen him?

A. Yes, because I was using the glasses.

17. Q. When did you last see the airship?

A. She was still there after eight o'clock. She was still between the beach and us.

18. Q. Very high then?

A. No, she was very low--about four hundred feet.

19. Q. You did not see her go out of sight in the clouds, did you?

A. No, she did not go out of sight, as long as we were there.

20. Q. When did you last sight the airship?

A. Eight o'clock, when I went down and had my breakfast.

21. Q. What time did you come up from breakfast.

A. No.

22. Q. What time did you come up from breakfast?

A. After eight o'clock--around 8:30.

23. Q. Did you see the airship then?

A. No, I did not pay any more attention to it after that. She looked in perfect shape.

24. Q. You did not hear any voices from the airship as if someone was trying to talk to you, did you?

A. No. Only the motors.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

1. Q. Please state your name?

A. M. Baughman.

2. Q. Your address?

A. The S. S. Daisy Gray.

3. Q. What is your position on the Daisy Gray?

A. A. B.

4. Q. Were you on watch between six and eight on August 16th?

A. Yes, I had the four to eight watch. I took the watch at 6:30 and went off at eight o'clock.

5. Q. Did you see an airship?

A. Yes, a blimp.

6. Q. Where did you first sight this?

A. The first time I saw it, it was on the port side and I went over on the side. It was going toward the 'Frisco Shore. I told the mate about it.

G A P Y



7. Q. About what time was that?  
A. Around seven or seven fifteen.
8. Q. Will you describe the movements of the airship?  
A. It was standing still at first and the next time it was standing still on the port side. Then all of a sudden she picked up speed and went around the stern.
9. Q. Came around the stern quite low?  
A. Yes, she headed toward 'Prisco. I could see two men in her.
10. Q. Do you remember what they had on?  
A. I was looking through glasses and I could see the two men on the ship. One of them had dark hair.
11. Q. Could you see what he had on?  
A. There was a round face. He had on a uniform like yours, (Witness here addressed Commander Lange, indicating by gesture the summer flight uniform which Commander Lange was wearing) and a cap and there was black on the shoulder stripes and I believe there was some gold on them there. They then went away.
12. Q. Did he have a moustache?  
A. No, I did not notice. He was looking out the window on the right.
13. Q. Did they wave to you?  
A. I did not notice. I saw something going along in the water--fire in the front and steam and smoke following it. All of us looked at it. This liberty ship was overtaking us.
14. Q. Where did you see the smoke?  
A. It was circling around like a torpedo in the water. About ten minutes to eight I saw another one on the left; astern.
15. Q. This was on the port side?  
A. Yes, sir.
16. Q. About how far away from the ship?  
A. About a mile or mile and a half.
17. Q. Was the airship directly over the bombs?  
A. When I saw her she was farther away toward Point Arena toward the north.
18. Q. When she flew over, the motors sounded good, did they?  
A. When we saw her the first time on the starboard side, real low, then on the port side stopped and then she came across the stern.
19. Q. You definitely saw two men?  
A. Yes.
20. Q. That was before you saw the bombs?  
A. Yes, Oh, yes.
21. Q. Did you see anything on the water in the vicinity of those smokes?  
A. There were some patrol boats.
22. Q. In the close vicinity of the bombs?  
A. No.

23. Q. Could you have seen a man in the water if there had been one in the water?

A. I do not know.

24. Q. When did you last see the airship?

A. About eight o'clock it looked okay to me. Then I went below.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statements covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board then, at 12:03 p.m., took a recess until 1:30 p.m., at which time it reconvened in the Board Room, U. S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, Calif.

Present:

All the members, the Recorder and the Reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name?

A. Wesley Frank Lamoureux, Seaman, Second Class, U.S.N., Armed Guard Unit, based at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California.

2. Q. Were you aboard the Albert Galatin the morning of August 16, 1942.

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. At which time she was inbound to San Francisco?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. Did you observe a blimp during the morning of August 16.

A. I did, sir.

5. Q. When did you first see the blimp?

A. It was around seven o'clock. We did not have a watch up there but it was approximately seven o'clock.

6. Q. Where was the blimp when you first saw it?

A. It was coming toward us on our starboard bow. It was quite a way off toward shore, when first sighted, but headed almost directly for us. We were just past the Farallones a short way when we first sighted her and she was coming in on the Marin side--coming from that direction.

7. Q. How long did you observe this?

A. Approximately one hour, sir. From the time we first sighted her until the time I last saw her.

8. Q. Would you tell the board your observations of the blimp and its direction and course as far as you remember during the period it was under your observation from approximately seven to eight o'clock..

A. Yes, sir. As I say, we first observed her coming on our starboard bow. She crossed our bow and also crossed over another ship

that was just behind us. She made a turn then and came back across our bow again. Then she went out over the water quite a way and she seemed to climb a little and swung around again and came around our stern from our port side. At that time I noticed a man standing in an open window of the gondola. It was on the port side of the gondola he was standing. I could make out his uniform was sort of brown or tan. I was not using the glasses and could not see his features clearly. She swung clear around and crossed our bow again and went out over the water and she was out around there for a while and the other man went to call the watch which was 7:30 and while he was down below I noticed the flare. It was just about two points off our bow and it was lying about, I would say, one hundred fifty yards off. I observed it with the glasses and was wondering what it was and looked up toward the flying bridge and they were also looking at it with the glasses and the pilot and captain were up there so I did not make any report when I saw that they were observing it. This flare had quite a bit of smoke coming from it and naturally we were looking other places also. At the time, I did not observe the blimp. Shortly thereafter I noticed another flare and it was directly on the other side of the first flare and directly beyond and in line. About that time they rang the general alarm. At that time we were rapidly going away from it. We alternately watched the buoys and the airship. I took my place at the pointer station and we trained in the general direction of the buoys. The telescope was very foggy and I could not make out the flame very clearly but the trainer followed in an arc and we observed it. The blimp was hovering over the spot where the flares were. We figured by that time it was a submarine. From then on I am not too positive of the actions of the dirigible except that it would come down very close over the water. In fact, it seemed to almost sit on the top of the water.

9. Q. Did it touch the water, do you think.

A. No, sir, but we were quite a distance from it at that time. It could have been fifty feet or less, but it was very very close, sir. I watched it pull its nose up and then I did not watch it any more. I was talking to my officer.

10. Q. Did you see it ascend into the clouds?

A. No, sir, the last I saw it was when it was just pulling its nose up.

11. Q. Was it a steep climb?

A. At about a ten degree angle. When it first came across our bow it came across very fast and the motors were roaring with the wind behind it. It was really coming. When they did turn they seemed to cut it around sharply.

12. Q. That's prior to the time it dropped the smoke bomb?

A. Yes sir.

13. Q. Did you see the blimp drop a smoke bomb?

A. No, sir.

14. Q. Did you see two men in the blimp?

A. I saw what appeared to be another man just in front of this man, standing in the window. I could not say if he was a man or not—it was just a blot.

15. Q. The first time it passed over?

A. No, the time it came over our stern, sir.

16. Q. What time was that?

A. Pretty hard to judge, sir, it was before the general alarm was sounded.

17. Q. Just prior to the time the alarm sounded?

A. Yes, sir.

18. Q. Did you say you saw one man standing up in the car?

A. Yes, sir, I could not see the bottom half of his body but he was standing close to the window so we could make his body out clearly and definitely establish that it was a man.

19. Q. Whereabouts was he in the car?

A. About midships, sir/

20. Q. Did you notice whether the door was open?

A. No, door was open, but it looked like a window was open, sir.

21. Q. From the time you first sighted the blimp until the time the smoke bomb was dropped, was the blimp following your course on zig-zag maneuvers across from port to starboard?

A. It seemed to be spending more time on the port side. It would barely come across our bow and then return to the port and go way out over the port bow. That's where it would generally make its circle.

22. Q. Where was the airship in relation to the smoke bombs.

A. When I first saw the smoke bomb, I did not notice the airship. I could not say whether I saw it immediately.

23. Q. Did it seem to descend to the water, close to the smoke bomb?

A. Later on, yes, when it came close to the water.

24. Q. About what time was this when you saw the airship approach close to the water?

A. About ten minutes after eight.

25. Q. About how far astern of you was the blimp at that time?

A. A good two miles, sir.

26. Q. Did you notice anything in the water in the vicinity of the smoke bomb?

A. Before that, we had noticed quite a few large whales. They were coming on the port side of us. They may have mistaken the whales for a submarine.

27. Q. You sighted nothing that might have been a submarine?

A. No, sir, There was a small, white fishing boat right off the Farallones. It was on the in-shore side of the Farallones. As we passed the Farallones it stood out in the channel Buoy. It would have been a lot closer to the ship when it came close to the water than we were.

28. Q. Did the airship seem to be in control at all times?

A. Yes, sir. The only thing was that it did seem to be travelling very fast and turning very abruptly.

29. Q. The last time you saw the blimp or airship was about eight ten?

A. Yes, sir.

30. Q. That's after she was close to the water?

A. Yes, sir.

31. Q. And under way?

A. Yes, sir, under way at all times.

32. Q. No one else in that vicinity who could have dropped a flare other than the blimp?

A. No sir.

33. Q. Did you know how long that flare burned or smoked?  
A. I would say for at least forty minutes. It was from seven-thirty on.

34. Q. From the time it was first sighted until you last saw it.  
A. No, sir, we couldn't see the flares. It was too far away.

35. Q. From the time you first sighted it until when?  
A. We watched it as far as we could.

36. Q. You observed it for about how long?  
A. About twenty minutes.

37. The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been full brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. State your name, rate and present station?

A. Cameron Lind Seger, gunner's mate, third class, aboard the SS Albert Galatin.

2. Q. You were aboard the Albert Galatin on Sunday, August 16, between 6:30 and 9:00.

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. And did you observe an airship or dirigible during that period of time?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. When did you first see it?

A. About 7:42.

5. Q. Where was the airship at that time?

A. The relative bearing was about two hundred degrees.

6. Q. Do you mean somewhat on the port quarter?

A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. How long did you observe the airship?

A. From the time I went to general quarters until the dirigible went out of sight.

8. Q. About what time did it go out of sight?

A. I think it was about eight o'clock.

9. Q. Did you see any smoke bombs?

A. I saw two.

10. Q. Where were they?  
A. They were on the port quarters.
11. Q. How far away?  
A. Oh, when they first came up, they were between five hundred and one thousand yards away.
12. Q. Could you describe in general the course of the airship during the time you observed it?  
A. It maneuvered over the area of the smoke bombs and circled three or four times over there, then went away from us to the stern and went low—within fifty feet of the water, and rose to normal height and appeared to drop some ballast which looked like sand or liquid. Then it went away and disappeared at about its normal height.
13. Q. What would you estimate that to be?  
A. About five hundred feet. I imagine.
14. Q. Did it disappear from view or did it go up into the overcast?  
A. I believe it went into the overcast.
15. Q. Did it appear to rise rapidly from that lowest point.  
A. Yes.
16. Q. On a level, even keel?  
A. Yes, sir.
17. Q. Did it reappear after it first disappeared?  
A. No, sir.
18. Q. The last time you saw it was after she rose from the lowest position?  
A. Yes, sir.
19. Q. How far from your ship would you estimate the airship to have been when she disappeared?  
A. I imagine it was about eight thousand yards.
20. Q. Were you close enough to observe the interior of the car?  
A. No, sir.
21. Q. You did not see anyone in the car?  
A. No, sir.
22. Q. Were the motors turning over?  
A. Yes, sir.
23. Q. Could you hear them?  
A. I believe I could hear them.
24. Q. Was the sun out at that time?  
A. No, it was not.
25. Q. Sky overcast?  
A. Yes, sir.
26. Q. From which end of the car did this sand or water you observed falling come?  
A. I could see it when it dropped through the air but could not see it when it first came out.
27. Q. This is at the time that the ship made the ascent from the point until you last saw it?  
A. It was just after it rose from the water.

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28. Q. Could you state definitely whether the airship touched the water?

A. No, it did not touch the water.

29. Q. The first time you saw the airship was while you were at general quarters?

A. Yes, sir.

30. Q. This is directly afterward that you spotted the smoke bomb?

A. Yes, sir.

31. Q. The airship at that time was where?

A. On the port quarter.

32. Q. Was it circling over the smoke bombs?

A. Yes, sir.

33. Q. Did you see anything in the water in the immediate vicinity of the smoke bombs?

A. No, sir.

34. Q. Would you have been able to have seen a man in the water?

A. Yes, sir.

35. Q. About how long did you observe the flare? How long did they last?

A. I cannot recall how long they lasted.

36. Q. Have you seen these airships on several occasions?

A. Yes, I have, sir.

37. Q. Did this airship seem to be in normal condition?

A. It appeared so to me, sir.

38. Q. Did you see any other vessel closer to the flares than the Albert Galatin?

A. No, sir.

39. Q. Could these flares have been dropped by any surface craft in the area or any other aircraft except the blimp.

A. No, sir.

40. Q. Did you see anything else drop from the blimp?

A. You mean besides the ballast?

41. Q. Anything else?

A. Just what appeared to be liquid or sand.

42. Q. Did you see any smoke coming from the engines?

A. No, sir.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

C O P Y

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rate and present assignment?  
A. Richard John Patterson, seaman, second class, U.S.N., stationed aboard the ship Albert Galatin.
2. Q. Were you aboard the Albert Galatin on the morning of Sunday, August 16, 1942?  
A. Yes, sir.
3. Q. Did you observe an airship or dirigible at that time.  
A. Yes, Sir.
4. Q. When did you first see it?  
A. First saw it about two minutes after general alarm was sounded.
5. Q. Where was it then?  
A. It was aft of our ship, just about off the starboard side.
6. Q. How far?  
A. Well, not over a quarter of a mile away.
7. Q. How long did you see it?  
A. I would say it must have been one-half hour.
8. Q. Could you, just in general, describe its course during the time you observed it?  
A. Most of the time it was going away from the ship—southwest—going out toward the Farallones.
9. Q. What was the approximate altitude?  
A. Not over fifteen hundred feet. It was changing altitude all the time. It would come down. Once it came down within about twenty-five feet of the water.
10. Q. Did it go into the clouds at any time?  
A. The visibility was very poor.
11. Q. Did you see any smoke or flares?  
A. No, sir.
12. Q. You did not see any smoke bomb?  
A. No, sir.
13. Q. You did not see any smoke bomb?  
A. No, sir.
14. Q. After the airship made its closest approach to the water, did you see anything drop from it?  
A. Yes, sir, I do not know whether it was sand or liquid. It was one or the other. It was like someone pouring it out.
15. Q. Did it rise slowly or rapidly from that time?  
A. It was rising pretty slow.
16. Q. On an even keel or nose up?  
A. Even keel
17. Q. Was that the last time you saw it?  
A. It started travelling off southward and it disappeared pretty fast.



18. Q. Have you any idea what caused it to disappear, whether it was out of visible distance or in the clouds, or what?  
A. I would say it was going southeast the last time I saw it.
19. Q. Do you think it could have disappeared without going into the clouds?  
A. No, sir, I do not think so.
20. Q. When you lost sight of the dirigible, could you still see the Farallones?  
A. Yes, sir.
21. Q. About what time was that, that you lost sight of the airship?  
A. It must have been about 8:10 or 8:15.
22. Q. You know it was after eight?  
A. Yes, sir.
23. Q. You could still see the Farallones?  
A. Yes, sir.
24. Q. Were the motors turning over?  
A. I could not say for sure about that.
25. Q. You did not hear them?  
A. No, sir.
26. Q. At the time you observed the blimp was the sun on her at any time?  
A. The sun, sir?
27. Q. Yes, the sun?  
A. No, sir.
28. Q. About how long did you observe this spray coming from the ship?  
A. I do not believe it was over one minute, sir.
29. Q. Did that appear to dissolve before it hit the water?  
A. Yes, it did. It was sort of dark when it left the ship but seemed like someone pouring it out in spurts.
30. Q. Did any of the falling stuff appear to touch the water?  
A. No, sir, it never.
31. Q. Which end of the car did the stuff come from?  
A. From the starboard side.
32. Q. How far aft in the car?  
A. About midships, but it was pretty hard to tell.
33. Q. Did it appear to be under control at all times?  
A. Yes, sir, it seemed so to me but it did act queerish at times.
34. Q. In what way?  
A. It would come up and go down all the time. The one time we thought it would touch on the water it went about twenty-five feet from the surface and stayed there quite a while.
35. Q. Did it actually touch?  
A. No, sir.
36. Q. Did it actually hold its position in one spot?  
A. Yes, sir.

37. Q. Then after it held its position in one spot, did it start up suddenly?

A. Yes, but not fast—just moderately.

38. Q. That was the time you witnessed the spray coming from the ship?

A. Yes.

39. Q. Before you observed the spray dislodged?

A. Yes, sir.

40. Q. That was the last time you saw the ship?

A. No, I saw it for a while going southward.

41. Q. Still rising?

A. Yes—not very fast, but was gaining altitude all the time.

42. Q. Did it disappear into the clouds?

A. I think it was fog.

43. Q. But it disappeared at that time?

A. Yes.

44. Q. Did you see it again after that?

A. No, I never.

45. Q. That was about 8:15?

A. Yes, I do not think it was any later.

46. Q. At the time the airship came closest to the water, did you see any vessel closer to it than your ship?

A. I think there was a small ship behind us. It was not over fifteen hundred yards from us.

47. Q. Did you see any other object on the surface near the airship?

A. No, sir.

48. Q. No oil slick?

A. No, sir.

49. Q. No other object?

A. No, sir.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board, then, at 3:30 p.m., adjourned until 10 a.m. Monday, August 24, 1942.

U. S. Naval Air Station  
Moffett Field, California  
Monday, August, 24, 1942.

The board met at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder.  
George Finley Phillips, Junior, yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R.,  
reporter.

The record of proceedings of the third and fourth days were read and approved.

The board, then, at 12:15 p.m., took a recess until 1:15 p.m. at which time it reconvened in the Board Room at U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

Present:

All the members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank and present station.

A. Lieutenant R. J. Blair, U.S.N.R., Squadron ZP-32, Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. Are you a qualified Naval Aviator (Airship)?

A. I am awaiting such designation at this time.

3. Q. Are you a qualified civil pilot?

A. Yes, I am a lighter-than-air pilot and hold an instructor's rating and blind-flying rating under the Civil Aeronautics Authority. My pilot's license number 32079.

4. Q. Will you briefly give your experience in lighter-than-air and the number of hours you have flown in L-type ships or comparable ships?

A. In L-types I have flown seven thousand hours, I started flying in 1923 in the United States Army, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in 1927, have been actively engaged in flying lighter-than-air aircraft, principally L-type ships for the past fifteen years.

5. Q. Mr. Blair, you are the Flight Material Officer for ZP-32?

A. Yes, sir.

6. Q. And as such you were requested to prepare an estimate of the damage to the L-8 and also to estimate the cost of repair of that damage?

A. That's right.

7. Q. Do you have that estimate of the damage available?

A. Yes, sir, I personally prepared an estimate of the damage to the bag of the airship L-8 and also on a blueprint drawing of an airship comparable to the L-8 I marked, in red pencil, the damage to the bag. The other items of damage to the L-8 were compiled by the Assembly and Repair Inspector. I was right with him when he went over everything and estimated the damages on that. He reported the damages and I estimated the cost of repairs.

Lt. Blair submitted to the Board a copy of a letter from the Flight Material Officer to the Commanding Officer, ZP-32, dated August 19, 1942, subject "damages to the L-8 airship bag by gores and patterns." The copy of this letter was received in evidence and marked "Exhibit 9."

Lt. Blair submitted to the Board a drawing 66070-215, title "General Arrangement of T2 Airship" upon which were numerous markings in red pencil. This was admitted by the Board as evidence and marked "Exhibit 10."

Lt. Blair submitted copy of a memorandum from the Assembly and Repair inspection department to the Commanding Officer, ZP-32, dated August 18, 1942, subject "Necessary repairs to the L-8 airship." A copy of this memorandum was admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 11."

8. Q. On the drawing that you submitted (Exhibit 10), there are numerous red pencil marks, can you explain what these are intended to designate?

A. The red lines mark the tears in the L-8. However, it should be noted in some instances where the lines are straight, the tears may be ragged. Also where a red circle appears with a line in the middle, that indicates a burned spot from the electric wire which was broken when the L-8 deflated and landed in Daly City. The marks placed on this drawing (Exhibit 10), were placed there after a careful examination of the bag of the L-8 after the accident which occurred August 16.

9. Q. Could you, Mr. Blair, establish the total cost of repairs to the L-8?

A. Yes, sir. The total estimated cost of repairs to the L-8 is twelve thousand five hundred dollars (\$12,500.00).

10. Q. That includes the car and bag?

A. That is total repairs, providing a new bag is not essential. Cost of a new bag is twenty-eight thousand seven hundred forty-two dollars (\$28,742.00).

11. Q. Would that raise the total figure?

A. Yes, sir, that would raise the total figure by twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000.00), sir.

12. Q. And could you also establish the time that would be required to effect these repairs?

A. To effect repairs on everything but the bag will take ten (10) days. The bag repairs, if made, will take close to ninety (90) days.

13. Q. Will you add what is being done toward conditioning the L-8?

A. Repairs to the car, fins and bag accessories are well under way. The ship will be ready for erection Wednesday, August 27, 1942, sir, and will be ready to test fly some time between the 1st and 3rd of September by using the spare L bag and two spare engines and propellers.

14. Q. What do you think the Squadron proposes to do with the salvaged material?

A. The engines are in Pacific Airmotive Company now for overhaul and those engines, as soon as overhauled, will be returned to the Squadron and used for spares.

15. Q. Is the same true of the propellers?

A. Yes, sir.

16. Q. What is the recommended disposition of the damaged bag of the L-8?

A. Well, sir, considering the cost of a new bag, and the scarcity of rubber, I would recommend that they repair and overhaul this bag for

17. Q. Mr. Blair, do you know when the last complete inspection of the L-8 was made?

A. Yes sir, the last complete inspection of the L-8 was made August 11, 1942.

18. Q. Do you have a report of that inspection?

A. Yes, sir.

19. Q. Are you the custodian of that report?

A. Yes, sir.

(A copy of this quarterly Inspection Form dated August 11, 1942, was submitted to the Board and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 12").

20. Q. From the quarterly inspection report (Exhibit 12), what, in your opinion, was the condition of the airship as of August 11, 1942?

A. Well, the condition of the L-8, as reported by the Assembly and Repair inspectors on their quarterly inspection report (Exhibit 12), was satisfactory except for the minor items noted therein and these minor items were all corrected before the airship was returned to service.

21. Q. Mr. Blair, were you in charge of the salvage party which went to Daly City to salvage the L-8 on the morning of August 16?

A. Yes, sir, I was detailed for that by Captain Watson of the Squadron.

22. Q. Would you give a general statement of the condition of the L-8 at the time you found it?

A. Yes, sir. The condition of the ship on arrival of the salvage crew--the bag was completely deflated. The rear ballonette had been ripped to deflate the air. The car was resting on the engines, outriggers and stern of the car. There had been no damage done by spectators other than the cutting of the bag by firemen and police to release the remaining gas.

23. Q. Was the damage to the car which you found sufficient to indicate that the occupants might have been injured thereby?

A. No, sir. The damages to the car and the ship in general were so slight that had the occupants been in the ship they would not have been injured in its final landing.

24. Q. Q. On examination of the bag of the L-8 on return to Moffett Field, did you make a very close survey of fabric?

A. Yes, sir. I examined the bag on the outside and determined all the gores and patterns that were damaged and opened up the after section and examined the rear ballonette.

25. Q. In your examination, did you find any bullet holes or shrapnel holes in the bag?

A. No, sir, no evidence of bullet holes or shrapnel holes could be found.

26. Q. Was there any indication of fire?

A. No, other than the section of the bag that was on the high-tension line and there were two holes burned in at the bonding and lighting wires on the bag.

27. Q. Can you state whether these were obviously incident to the landing?

A. Yes, these burns were scorched fabric. The burned section s were not clear through the fabric. The firemen reported the burning from contact with high-tension lines and this was evident from my inspection.

U U I I  
28. Q. Were you familiar with the weather and operating conditions on the morning of August 16, 1942?

A. Yes, sir, by reading the aerographers' report sent to the squadron.

29. Q. In your opinion, under the operating conditions on the morning of August 16, 1942, would it have been possible for the occupants to have been thrown out of the car in flight by the motion of the ship?

A. No, sir, that would be an impossibility.

30. Q. In your opinion would it have been possible for the door of the car to have gotten in the full-open position you found it accidentally while in flight?

A. No, sir, that would be impossible.

31. Q. In your opinion, what would have been the result of the lightening of the L-8 by the weight of the two passengers, while on the flight in question, assuming the combined weight to have been about three hundred pounds?

A. The normal procedure of a ship lightened that much would rise until it had valved automatically enough gas to reach its own equilibrium.

32. Q. What would you estimate the height would have been in this case, the ship having been about two hundred pounds statically heavy to take off and having consumed approximately one hundred twenty pounds of fuel?

A. Roughly, I would say it would rise through pressure height and reach its own equilibrium at about twenty-five hundred feet. After the ship did reach the pressure height it would lose enough helium to equalize the lift of the gas with the load of the ship and then would drift and slowly descend. The condition on reaching the shore line would not necessarily be to make a final landing. Vertical currents on the rising shore line would tend to carry the ship aloft to such altitude for it to reach its final landing at Daly City.

33. Q. In case of engine failure, what is the common practice as to action that is to be taken?

A. The first procedure is to immediately determine if you can start the engines. If unable to do so, then to bring your ship up to sufficient height by ballasting, to report your position, send in your emergency call and then do everything possible to get your engines started. If you are unable to do so, free balloon your ship until such time as you are fully prepared to make a safe landing.

34. Q. Can you see any reason for voluntary abandonment of the L-8 on the flight in question with 650 pounds of bombs and other disposable weights still aboard.

A. No, sir, I can see no reason for abandoning ship with all the safety factors available.

35. Q. Under conditions prevailing on this flight, would it not have been practicable to have lightened the L-8 sufficiently to have free ballooned her to shore and made a safe landing?

A. Not knowing under what conditions these people left the ship, had they stayed it would have been possible to have free ballooned their ship to the shore line.

36. Q. From your experience, can you think of any reason for disturbing ballast while the ship is ascending?

A. No, sir.

37. Q. Is there any way, except manually, to do so?  
A. No, sir.

38. Q. Is there anything that you can add to your testimony which would be of assistance to the Board?  
A. Well, sir, I do not believe so.

39. Q. In your opinion would it have been practicable to have effected a safe landing at sea near one of the several surface craft on the morning of the 16th?

A. Yes, sir, I would say that you could land a ship within fifty feet of an object,--of a planned landing spot.

40. Q. Have you been able to arrive any time at a reasonably satisfactory theory to explain the circumstances of this accident?

A. No, sir, I haven't.

41. Q. Considering the morning of the take-off, the ship statically heavy two hundred pounds, cruising at normal speed for a period of one and one-half hours, would it have been possible for the ship to ascend as a free balloon without disposing of ballast?

A. No, sir, it would be impossible.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank and present station?

A. Kensel A. Sprague, Ensign, U.S.N., attached to ZP-32, Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. You were attached to the Treasure Island unit of ZP-32?

A. Yes, sir, temporary duty at Treasure Island.

3. Q. From August 13 to 16?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. And as such, what were your duties?

A. I was up there under instruction.

5. Q. Are you qualified as a Naval Aviator (Airship)?

A. Yes, my designation is somewhere between the Bureau and hers.

6. Q. Approximately how many hours have you had in non-rigid airships?

A. I should say better than two thousand.

7. Q. You were present on the morning of August 16 when the L-8 took off?

A. Yes, sir.

8. Q. What were your duties at that time?  
A. I was more or less just standing by at that time--no special duties.
9. Q. Was there anything unusual or abnormal with reference to the take-off?  
A. No, sir, nothing--just a normal wheel take-off.
10. Q. Did you see Mr. Cody and Mr. Adams that morning?  
A. Yes, sir.
11. Q. Did that appear to be in normal good health and spirits?  
A. Yes, sir.
12. Q. You observed no friction of any sort?  
A. No, sir, none whatever.
13. Q. Did you observe Mr. Cody and Mr. Adams enter the ship?  
A. Yes, sir.
14. Q. Did Mr. Cody have a confidential file brief case with him?  
A. Yes, sir.
15. Q. Did you enter the cabin of the ship prior to take-off?  
A. No, sir.
16. Q. What was the weigh-off of the ship prior to the take-off?  
A. I should say around 150 pounds heavy.
17. Q. What was the length of the take-off--that is, the taxi take-off?  
A. Pretty hard for me to judge the distance but I would say 150 yards.
18. Q. Mr. Sprague, you were the first officer from ZP-32 to arrive at the scene of the deflation and landing of the L-8 at Daly City?  
A. Mr. Ulrich and I arrived at the same car.
19. Q. Were you the first officer inside the car?  
A. Yes, sir, I am sure I was.
20. Q. What condition did you find with reference to the ignition switches?  
A. They were both on.
21. Q. How about the master switch?  
A. It was on.
22. Q. With reference to the radio, did you notice the position of the controls?  
A. I did not, myself, notice the position of the radio controls, but I heard the radio generator running.
23. Q. Did you notice the fuel valves?  
A. Yes, sir.
24. Q. What position were they in?  
A. The port tank was off, the starboard and center tanks were on, however, I did not place any stress on the position of the valves because from bystanders I learned that others had been in the after end of the car before me and might have moved the valves, as there was evidence of gas disposal on the ground.



25. Q. On arrival at the scene of the accident, did you notice the position of the loud speaker microphone?  
A. It was hanging out the door--you are speaking of the Teletalk?
26. Q. Yes.  
A. It was hanging out the door.
27. Q. What was the position of the door?  
A. The door was latched open.
28. Q. Did you note the position of the damper valves?  
A. The left damper was locked open.
29. Q. From your experience this would be a normal operating position of the damper valve?  
A. Yes, sir. In automatic flying, of course.
30. Q. Did you notice anything unusual or out of the ordinary when you entered the cur.  
A. Not a thing.
31. Q. Everything apparently was in place?  
A. Yes, sir.
32. Q. Did you check all disposable equipment.  
A. As far as I could, yes, sir.
33. Q. Q. Could you give us a list of that disposable equipment?  
A. I found the following in place and intact: life raft, machine gun, ammunition, three parachute harnesses, three parachutes, one life jacket, brief case of confidential papers. I do not know of any other disposable weight. The depth charge was in place on the port side. The one on the starboard side was missing, apparently had been knocked off.
34. Q. What was the position of the bomb release levers?  
A. They were in their normal position.
35. Q. Did you check the float flares?  
A. I checked them after they were handed out of the ship.
36. Q. How many were there?  
A. Three.
37. Q. Did you notice whether or not the door latch was closed or open when you went aboard the ship?  
A. No, sir, I did not.
38. Q. Did you notice the condition of the rip panel cord?  
A. No, it is outside the door. I did not notice.
39. Q. Did the condition of the car indicate that the ship had made a gentle free balloon landing in the street?  
A. Yes, sir.
40. Q. In what position was the confidential file brief case when you went aboard?  
A. It was forward of the spare seat, upright on the deck. That's where we always carried it.
41. Q. Was it secured in any way to the seat?  
A. No, sir.

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C O P Y

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The Board then, at 4:00 p.m. adjourned until 10 a.m. August 25, 1942.

C O P Y

U. S. Naval Air Station,  
Moffett Field, California.  
Tuesday, August 25, 1942.

The Board met at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member;  
Lt. Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lt. (jg) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., Recorder.  
George F. Phillips, Jr., yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R., reporter,

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

The record of proceedings of the fifth day was read and approved.

The Board announced it would adjourn to the City Hall, Daly City, California.

The Board reconvened at the City Hall, Daly City, California, at 11:30 a.m.

Present: All the members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, please.  
A. Riccardo Capovilla.
2. Q. What is your address  
A. 401 Chestnut St., San Francisco, Calif.
3. Q. Were you on the beach on Sunday, August 16, 1942?  
A. I was down on the beach below the Olympic Club Golf Course. I had on my suit and was going for a swim when I first saw the blimp.
4. Q. When did you first see the airship?  
A. I saw it when I was going to swim--about eleven o'clock. It was about ten or fifteen minutes after eleven when I saw it.
5. Q. Where was the airship when you first saw it.  
A. About fifty feet away from the edge of the water.
6. Q. Fifty feet high in the air and fifty feet away off-shore?  
A. Yes.
7. Q. Did you watch the airship then?  
A. I stayed there and watched it.
8. Q. Was the bag bent at the time it fell.  
A. Yes, then it came in from the water very slow.
9. Q. Did it come toward you broadside?  
A. Yes, when I first saw the airship it was about fifty feet out from shore and about fifty feet off the water. As I watched it, it traveled in and the wheel struck just a few feet from the water's edge. The wheel of the car struck the sand bank above the water. The ship then rose and travelled up the canyon not hitting anything else until the side of the

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car hit the rise of ground. As the airship struck on the rising ground I saw something round that looked like a bomb knocked off and roll down the hill. The blimp then rose over the embankment and travelled out of sight.

10. Q. When you first sighted the airship were the engines running?  
A. I am not sure, but I do not think so.
11. Q. Did you see both sides of the car?  
A. Not exactly, because when it landed it went straight.
12. Q. Did you notice an open door in the Car?  
A. No, I did not. I was looking for someone in the window.
13. Q. Did you see anyone in the car?  
A. No, I did not see anyone.
14. Q. How close were you to the car?  
A. About fifty feet.
15. Q. Could you see the inside of the car through the window?  
A. I could see very well.
16. Q. You did not see anyone in the car?  
A. No, I did look for that purpose and did not see anyone.
17. Q. Did the car land hard or very easy?  
A. Very, very easy. The track the wheel made in the sand was about three or four inches deep.
18. Q. About how high did the airship ascend after it struck the beach?  
A. Oh, I would say fifteen feet.
19. Q. If anyone had been in the car, would they have been able to have stepped out?  
A. Yes.
20. Q. Did you see anything hanging from below the car?  
A. I saw a rope hanging from the nose of the balloon.
21. Q. Did you see anything below the car.  
A. No.
22. Q. When she hit the bank and you saw the round object break/and roll did you see anything else fall off or fall out of the car?  
A. No.
23. Q. Did you ever see any part of the ship--wheel or otherwise strike the water at any time?  
A. No, never touched the water.
24. Q. Was there any water dripping off the ship when you saw it?  
A. No, the car was dry.
25. Q. Was there anyone else on the beach within your vision at that time?  
A. No, I never saw anyone and I looked all over. I was all alone.

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The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The Board then, at 12:00 p.m., took a recess until 1:00 p.m., at which time it reconvened in the City Hall, Daly City, California. Present: All the members, the recorder, and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. What is your name, please, and your address?  
A. William Morris, address 419 Bellevue Avenue, Daly City, California.
2. Q. On the morning of August 16, was your car damaged when the airship L-8 landed on Bellevue Avenue.  
A. Slight damage to the left front.
3. Q. Could you list that damage?  
A. The left headlight was bent forward and the hood was dented in and the side of the top had a few minor scratches.
4. Q. What type of car was it?  
A. Dodge sedan, 1928, California license No. 54 E 511.
5. Q. Did you witness the actual landing of the ship?  
A. No, I did not see the actual landing when it hit the pole but I saw it coming down.
6. Q. Has your car been repaired?  
A. No, it has not.
7. Q. What do you estimate the cost of repair?  
A. I do not know.
8. Q. Do you plan to submit a claim for the damages?  
A. No.
9. Q. How soon after the airship landed in the street did you see it?  
A. It was soon enough so I could smell the helium next to my house. I believe the fire department was the first there.
10. Q. Mr. Morris, did you notice anything on the ground under the airship?  
A. Yes, I saw gas under the left motor.
11. Q. A great amount?  
A. No.
12. Q. Estimate it?  
A. I will say one gallon.
13. Q. You did not observe anything hanging out of the car?  
A. No, I did not.
14. Q. Did you notice the position of the door of the car?  
A. No, I did not see whether the door was open or closed.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the Recorder:

1. Q. Will you please state your name and address?  
A. Thomas O'Brien, 23 Riesel Avenue, Daly City, California.
2. Q. You are a member of the Daly City fire department?  
A. Right.
3. Q. What company is that?  
A. Company three (3).
4. Q. Was Company Three present on the morning of August 16th when the airship landed on Bellevue Avenue in Daly City, California?  
A. It was approximately one hundred feet from me.
5. Q. Do you know who was the first one to reach the blimp after it struck the ground.  
A. Well, I believe I was the first one. If anyone else was there we could not see them.
6. Q. Where did you go--to the gondola?  
A. Yes, to the gondola.
7. Q. Did you look in it?  
A. Yes.
8. Q. Which side were you on?  
A. On the right hand side facing toward the ocean.
9. Q. Which side of the airship?  
A. Right hand side, facing forward.
10. Q. Did you notice a door in the car?  
A. I do not know. I climbed up on the car and looked through the window of the car. I climbed up there. (Witness here indicated starboard bomb rack on car of L-8 from picture taken at scene of accident).
11. Q. There was no one in the car?  
A. No.
12. Q. Did you notice anything hanging out of the car?  
A. I did not see anything.
13. Q. You did not get into the car?  
A. No, I did not.
14. Q. Do you know who was the first inside the car?  
A. No.

15. Q. Did you see anything--any gas on the ground?  
A. There was a slight leakage.
16. Q. Mr. O'Brien, did you see the airship land in the street?  
A. Yes, we were following it down the street.
17. Q. About what time was that?  
A. Approximately 11:30.
18. Q. What was the shape of the airship as it descended in the street?  
A. It was in kind of a "V" shape.
19. Q. When it landed in the street was it inflated with gas?  
A. I could not tell you. When we got to it the thing was all split apart.
20. Q. The bag was deflated when you got there?  
A. Yes, there was no gas.
21. Q. Did you notice any tears in the bag when you arrived?  
A. No.
22. Q. Did you observe anyone cutting or using any sharp instrument to tear into the bag?  
A. No, I did not.
23. Q. Did you see the airship strike the electric light wires or poles?  
A. Yes, sir.
24. Q. Did you notice any flame at the time it struck?  
A. No flame, just a few sparks as the wires broke.
25. Q. Was there any indication of arcing due to contact with high-tension wires when you arrived?  
A. There were just the sparks.
26. Q. Did you see any bombs on the car?  
A. Yes, there was one bomb on one side of the car--on the left hand side.
27. Q. Was there a bomb on the right?  
A. No.
28. Q. Did you observe any instruments hanging on a cord outside of the door?  
A. I did not.
29. Q. Did you see anyone get into the car at all?  
A. I did not.
30. Q. Who was the first person to get inside the car?  
A. I do not know.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Will you please state your name and address?  
A. Richard L. Johnston, 423 Bellevue Avenue, Daly City, California.
2. Q. On the morning of August 16, 1942, when the L-8 landed, did it damage your car?  
A. Yes.
3. Q. Where was your car?  
A. In front of my house.
4. Q. What kind of car is it?  
A. Ford V-8, sedan, 1934, license No. 60 H 563.
5. Q. Would you give us a statement as to the extent of the damage?  
A. It sheared off the center bolt of the front spring, put a dent in the hood, broke off the side mirror and put a deep scratch in the rear fender on the right-hand side.
6. Q. Has this damage been repaired?  
A. The spring only, and they repaired the arm to the outside mirror.
7. Q. What was the cost of this?  
A. \$2.60.
8. Q. Could you estimate the cost of all repairs?  
A. I could not. The dent in the hood is not much a matter.
9. Q. Do you wish to submit a claim for repairs?  
A. No.
10. Q. Is it your intention to submit a claim?  
A. No, I do not think I will.
11. Q. Where did the airship land in relation to your home?  
A. Directly into the pole on the front of my house on Bellevue Avenue. It nosed slightly into the pole, hit the pole, then swung the tail around and it hit against the wires. The first thing to hit the ground was the tail. The gondola hung on a cross-arm of the post and the tail hit and evidently the scraping of the wire let the gas out of the bag and the tail dropped down. The bag of the blimp draped itself over my car. Then the gondola let loose from the post and came down. The right-hand side motor hit first.
12. Q. Did you notice any fire?  
A. No, I did not see any fire.
13. Q. Did the bag deflate immediately?  
A. Rather gradually, in fact it hit practically over my head and I had time enough to get from underneath.
14. Q. Was your house or any other house damaged?  
A. Not to my knowledge. It hit nothing but the post, as far as I could see.



15. Q. As far as you were able to observe the pole took all the impact?

A. Yes, sir.

16. Q. How far away did you see the airship before it landed?

A. Approximately two blocks. I was attracted by the sirens. The ship was partially deflated and had a sag in the top.

17. Q. Did you observe any firemen tearing any holes in the bag?

A. Yes, they used a long pole with a knife hook on it and pocket knives to rip the bag.

18. Q. Why were they doing this?

A. Evidently to let the gas out.

19. Q. Was there quite a bit of gas?

A. I could not see any need for tearing the bag myself. They were also looking into the bag to see if anyone was there. A Navy officer stopped them after they had torn quite a few holes in it.

20. Q. Did you observe anyone climbing up in the car?

A. Yes, the firemen went up and looked in it but the first ones to climb inside the car were Navy personnel.

21. Q. When you first saw the ship in flight did you notice whether or not the door of the gondola was open?

A. The door, as it hit, the door was sagging—not completely closed and not completely open. According to my recollection, the door was open.

22. Q. No injury to people in the street when the ship struck?

A. I was the closest one to it and it did not strike anyone.

23. Q. Did you notice any gas on the ground?

A. Just a small amount on the left hand motor there was some oil on the street and then a very small spot of gas had leaked out. This oil appeared after the motor had hung there for a while.

24. Q. Did you notice any gas dropped after the car came to rest?

A. No.

25. Q. Did the ship land easily or rather hard?

A. When the gondola finally came loose it came down hard, but the descent of the ship was gradual.

26. Q. Did you see anyone get out of the car when it landed?

A. No, there was no one in it before it landed as far as I could see, and I was watching it very close.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name and occupation.  
A. Sgt. William T. Brannan, member of the San Francisco Police Department, attached to the Ingleside station.

2. Q. You were in radio car No. 1 on the morning of August 16, 1942?  
A. Yes, received a call with reference to an army blimp that was in trouble. Time of the message was 11:22 a.m.

3. Q. About what time did you first sight the airship?  
A. I would say about one minute after receiving the message—that would be 11:23 a.m.

4. Q. At the time you first sighted the ship was she fully inflated?  
A. No, sir, it was collapsed in the center and sagging in the center.

5. Q. How high was she at that time?  
A. I would judge about three hundred feet when I first saw it. It fell very rapidly for about 150 or 200 feet then a wind took it and it popped up again. At that time I thought there was someone in it and they were trying to get the ship over toward the hills. It continued in a northeasterly direction and until it laid against a power pole.

6. Q. Did you observe the landing of the ship in the street?  
A. Yes.

7. Q. You followed the ship until you observed it descend in Bellevue Avenue.  
A. Yes, sir.

8. Q. About what time did it make this descent?  
A. About 11:25 a.m.

9. Q. Did you observe the descent of the ship in the street?  
A. Yes.

10. Q. Will you describe that descent.  
A. Well, it was going in a side motion and dropping at the same time. The ropes dragged over a couple of houses there and then the cabin struck against a pole and broke off the cross-arm. It was the cross-arm that tore the bag. A little of the gas was still in the rear end, and kept that end up. Then we got hold of it and pulled it down into the street. When the blimp broke off this arm, it settled to the street and bounced about six feet and stuck upright. I ascertained there was no one in the cabin and then we pulled the bag away from the plane. When it fell it broke two or three high-power wires. One of these wires laid against the left front part of the car.

11. Q. The burn was on the left front part of the car?  
A. Yes, sir.

12. Q. Sgt., did you see anything hanging out of the car before she struck?

A. No, I saw the door open and the door was not swinging—it seemed to be fastened. This was while it was in the air.

13. Q. Did you see anything hanging out of the door?  
A. I saw ear-phones hanging out of the door when I went over to see if there were any passengers in the car.

14. Q. Do you think these ear-phones were hanging out before anyone got to the car?

A. I believe I was the first one to that car and there was no one got to it but me, and those ear-phones were hanging out then. They were hanging out about one foot. These two phones were a double head-set--two receivers and a frame.

15. Q. Sgt. Brannan, could you state definitely whether anyone on the ground was injured at the landing of this airship?

A. No one was injured and there was no one touched by any part of the blimp when it landed.

16. Q. Did you observe any firemen cutting the bag to release the gas?

A. No.

17. Q. Did you notice any damage to the bag by the cross-arms or wires at the time it descended in Daly City?

A. The blimp appeared to be complete when it was in the air and when it came down on the street it pushed across a broken cross-arm of a power pole for about twenty or twenty-five feet and that tore the bag, which caused almost immediate deflation of the ship.

18. Q. Who was the first person to get in the car?

A. The first one into the car was a sailor.

19. Q. Do you know whether the engines were running when you first observed it?

A. No, the engines were not running. There was very little gas on the ground at the accident.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name and occupation.

A. L. F. Theis, Line Superintendent of the San Francisco Division of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

2. Q. I show you this paper dated August 25, 1942 and ask you if you can identify it?

A. It is an estimate of damage caused when the airship fell in Daly City. This is the actual statement.

3. Q. Total amount seventy-eight dollars and sixty-two cents (\$78.62)?

A. Yes, sir.

4. Q. Does this constitute the entire amount of damage caused to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company's lines?

A. Yes, sir. It represents the cost of repair of damages in full incurred by the landing of the L-8 on Bellevue Avenue in Daly City, August 16, 1942, between Oliver and Akton Streets.

(The Pacific Gas and Electric Company's statement of cost of repairs to overhead lines was submitted to the board, and was received as evidence and marked "Exhibit 13.")

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning. The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board then, at 3:15 p.m. adjourned until 10 a.m. August 26, 1942.

Q O P Y

The board met at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G), U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G), U.S.N.R., member;  
Lieutenant Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lieutenant (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder.  
George F. Phillips, Junior yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R.,  
reporter.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were  
present.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the  
subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as  
follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and present assignment.

A. Wendel W. Bemis, Lieutenant, U.S.N., Communications Officer,  
attached to and serving with Airship Patrol Squadron 32, Moffett Field,  
California.

2. Q. Mr. Bemis, as Communications Officer, did you make an  
examination of the radio installation in the L-8 after it landed at Daly  
City on August 16, 1942?

A. Not personally, but I caused one to be made by my leading  
radioman.

3. Q. I show you this paper dated August 19, 1942, entitled "Following  
conditions observed in checking radio installation of L-8" and ask you if  
you can identify this?

A. Yes, sir. It is a copy of a report which I received from  
Simpson and Devaney after they had checked the receivers, transmitter,  
battery, dynamotor and charging system of the L-8. This equipment was  
examined at Moffett Field after the L-8 had crashed at Daly City, Calif.  
on August 16, 1942.

This report was submitted to the board and was received as evidence  
and marked "Exhibit 14."

4. Q. Mr. Bemis, in the matter of the range filter switch condition  
described in this report, is it your opinion that this condition resulted  
during the flight of the L-8 on August 16, 1942, or subsequent to her  
landing at Daly City?

A. It is my personal conviction it resulted subsequent to the  
landing for this reason, sir. The radio had been in two-way use during  
the early part of the flight and the switch is in such a position as to  
make it improbable that either the pilot or co-pilot would have broken  
the contact on the switch during the flight.

5. Q. You stated that the transmitter was found to be set on the  
normal operating frequency. Is there any other reason than the low condi-  
tion of the battery which might have explained the absence of radio reports  
from the L-8 the latter part of the flight?

A. By that I assume you mean material condition of the radio  
equipment and the answer is "no."

6. Q. Did the specific gravity of the battery, as you found it, indicate sufficient power for reception?

A. I hesitate to give a definite answer. My own opinion is probably not, sir, because the battery was in a state of almost complete discharge--at least it was so discharged we could not measure the specific gravity with the hydrometer used.

7. Q. Then the same battery condition would have what effect on transmission from the L-8?

A. It would make transmission, I would say, impossible.

8. Q. Did this battery, on re-charge, come up to the normal condition?

A. Yes, sir.

9. Q. Had the battery been normally charged at the start of the flight on August 16, 1942, how long would this battery have operated the maximum probable load imposed on it?

A. I assume you mean if the generator had ceased operation?

10. Q. That's right sir, yes.

A. I would estimate not more than two and one-half hours, sir.

11. Q. Had the battery been normally charged at take-off on August 16, how many routine transmissions do you believe the battery would have permitted after failure of the generator?

A. It is quite probable that two contacts could have been made normally, sir. If they were made within the first hour after generator failure, it is quite possible that three or more might have been made.

12. Q. Had an attempt been made to start the engines with this battery, in your opinion, would a successful radio transmission have been possible after one attempt to use the starters?

A. Probably not.

13. Q. Is there any way of telling whether the battery had been used in an attempt to start the engines?

A. No.

14. Q. Have you received any reports as to the reception of the Bogen Hailer that was installed on the L-8?

A. At several times, Lt. Cody stated that he had used the Bogen Hailer successfully at heights up to five hundred feet to make voice contacts with surface vessels.

15. Q. What were Lt. Cody's reactions as to operation of this unit?

A. Lt. Cody seemed to be enthusiastic about its possibilities for use in certain conditions when other means of communications were not effective.

16. Q. Did Lt. Cody indicate to you that he had used this unit frequently in contacts with surface ships?

A. Lt. Cody had used the unit both for contacting surface ships and also for talking to the ground crew prior to landing, sir.

17. Q. I show you this papers marked "Log Sheet" dated August 16, 1942, and ask you can you identify it as a true copy of the log kept by Airship Patrol Squadron 32 base radio personnel at Moffett Field, California, covering the period during which the L-8 was in flight on August 16, 1942, until approximately 2200?

A. Yes, sir.

(The radio log for ZP-32, Moffett Field, California, dated August 16, 1942, was submitted to the Board and was admitted as evidence and marked "Exhibit 15.")

A. It does.

A. The log indicates his flight number is 101 and that is also his call for his flight.

A. At 1437 G.C.T. (0737 P.W.T.) the Love-8 called Wing Control and requested them to answer. At 1438 G.C.T. (0738) P.W.T.) Love-8 sent the following message to Wing Control "position four miles east of the Farallones. Standby. Acknowledge." and that message was acknowledged for by Wing Control. My log then indicates an attempt by Wing Control at 1517 G.C.T. (0817 P.W.T.) to contact the Love 8, but no further indication that the Love-8 answered repeated calls made from that time on, until 1823 G.C.T. (1123 P.W.T.) after which attempts were apparently discontinued. Efforts to contact the ship were made by Wing Control, Navy Treasure, Navy Moffett and a plane from Wing Control, without success. No direct contacts were made between the Love-8 and Navy Moffett during the morning of August 16, 1942.

### A. The Wing Control.

A. At Naval Air Station, Alameda, sir.

A. Yes, sir.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation was duly sworn and declared as follows:

A. Leonard Edgar Stilwell, Lt. (jg) A-V(T), U.S.N.R., attached to and serving with ZP-32, Moffett Field, California, under instruction as Naval Aviator and collateral duty as Assistant Engineering Officer.

A. Yes, sir, it is.

A copy of a letter from the Assistant Engineering Officer to the Commanding Officer dated August 22, 1942, subject "Report on Condition of L-8 Engines" was submitted to the Board and was admitted as evidence and marked "Exhibit 16."

3. Q. In your estimation, how long would these particular engines in the condition you found them, have been likely to idle if left unattended?

A. This particular type of engine, providing the carburetor was not set at too slow an idling speed, would idle probably several hours.

4. Q. Did examination of these two engines show any definite evidence of their having stopped through fouling of the plugs?

A. No, they did not.

5. Q. What is the gas consumption for these engines under cruising speed?

A. 12 to 13 gallons per hour, for both engines.

6. Q. What is the fuel consumption at idling speed?

A. I have never made a check but imagine it would be somewhere around three to five gallons for both engines.

7. Q. Do you know how much gasoline was remaining in the tanks of the L-8 after she was salvaged and returned to the station?

A. Yes, there was approximately forty-five (45) gallons remaining in the center tank.

8. Q. Do you believe it practicable to start these engines manually while in flight?

A. By hand crank?

9. Q. Yes.

A. I have heard of it being done but I do not think it would be practical at all.

10. Q. Did you examine the propellers of the L-8 after the accident?

A. Yes, sir.

11. Q. Is there any evidence that these propellers were rotating when they first made contact with the ground, or that the propellers struck the water while rotating?

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The Board then, at 12:10 p.m. took a recess until 1:15 p.m. at which time it reconvened in the Board Room at U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

Present:

All the members, the recorder and the reporter.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and assignment?

A. Mathew H. Gillespie, Ensign U.S.N. (T), attached to and serving at the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.



2. Q. Mr. Gillespie, on August 16, were you given instructions to institute a search of the area where it was reported that the L-8 had first struck the beach?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. And would you detail the extent of your search as to time and as to number of personnel used in that search?

A. We arrived on the scene about 1630, August 16, 1942. We had 45 sailors from Moffett Field and we had another thirty sailors from Treasure Island and ten sailors from the Coast Guard at Mills Field. We combed the area from Skyline Blvd. to 19th Avenue between Sloat Blvd. and Alemany. On the same duty the Army detail, under my direction searched the area between Skyline Blvd. and the shore, between Sloat Blvd. and Alemany. The Army party consisted of approximately 90 men.

4. Q. When did you stop this search on the 16th of August?

A. About 9 o'clock that night.

5. Q. The area was very thoroughly covered?

A. Yes, sir.

6. Q. Did you continue this search the following day?

A. Yes, sir. The next day, August 17th the party consisted of 50 men from Moffett Field. We left Moffett Field about four o'clock in the morning and arrived on the scene at daylight, which was around 5:30 a.m. We took a different route. We searched the beach from Seal Rock, between the Skyline Blvd. and the beach, clear down to Sharp Park--a distance of approximately fourteen miles. We returned to the scene where we were told the ship hit the beach and at 12 o'clock, we started and covered the area from the Skyline Blvd. to 19th Avenue, down through these lakes, between Sloat Ave. and Alemany--repeating the coverage of the previous day. We finished this at 1500 August 17 and returned to the station.

7. Q. Did you find either of the occupants of the L-8, or any material evidence?

No, sir.

8. Q. In your opinion was a very thorough search made of this area?

A. Yes, sir. Very thorough.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, please, and your rate and assignment?

A. Gerard Charles Stephany, Aviation Machinist's Mate, third class, U.S.N., attached to and serving ZP-32, Moffett Field, Calif.

2. Q. Are you a qualified parachute man?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. And you are solely responsible for all parachutes and life jackets used by ZP-32?

A. Yes.

in

4. Q. How often do you inspect this equipment?

A. I inspect the life jackets once a week for evidence of a seal being broken and inspect the life rafts once every month for evidence of being cracked--breaking of the seal.

5. Q. Do you inflate both life jackets and life rafts?

A. Yes, by the CO2 automatic inflation. I inspect the life jackets once a week for evidence of breaking the cellophane seal on the hand pull of the CO2 bottles and inspect the life rafts once a month.

6. Q. On your weekly inspection of the life jackets, do you inspect for leakage?

A. No, sir, that's semi-annual.

7. Q. Can you state when the life jackets which were in the L-8 on the morning of August 16, 1942, were last inspected?

A. Last inspected just before the ship went to Watsonville, about the first or second of August.

8. Q. We show you a life jacket removed from the L-8. Can you state when you last inspected this jacket?

A. Yes, I can. In the early part of this month--August, and at that time all the life jackets in the L-8 were inspected.

9. Q. How do you determine this?

A. By the markings in the vicinity of the bottle.

10. Q. Did this inspection include the condition of the bottles and the airtightness?

A. Yes, sir, and also for the inflation.

11. Q. And found satisfactory?

A. Yes, sir.

12. Q. Are these bottles sealed in so you can tell if they have been tampered with?

A. That's the main purpose of that cellophane seal on them, which was on each of these jackets in the L-8.

13. Q. Did you inspect this life jacket that came out of the L-8, on August 16, or shortly thereafter?

A. Yes, sir, it was inspected on Sunday, August 16.

14. Q. Were the seals broken?

A. Everything was intact.

15. Q. Did you happen to pressure test at that time?

A. No, I did not. The way I brought it up this morning is exactly as it was when I got it.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank, and present station?

A. Lt. Commander William Loveland, U.S.N., attached to and serving at the Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. And you are the Aerological Officer for the Station?

A. Yes.

3. Q. Will you read into the record that you submit herewith the following record and data?

A. I submit the following weather observations. (Exhibit 17). The Farallone Islands, hourly, commencing at 0400 P.W.T. of August 16, 1942, and Point Bonita for 0800 the same date, Point Reyes, hourly weather from 0700 to 1000 the same date and Point Montero for 0700, 0900 and 1000 and Daly City for 1130--all of August 16, 1942. I might add that all observations with the exception of Daly City were made by competent weather observers. The report from the Farallone Islands is not too representative as to wind direction and force because of the location of the wind-observing station but for other elements the Farallone reports are very representative. Weather map (Exhibit 18) for 0530 P.W.T. on August 16, 1942, shows a normal weather set-up for this time of the year. A thermal low is centered over southeastern California with trough line extending to the northwest. The axis of the trough runs parallel to the Coast and is centered, roughly, two hundred miles inland from the Coast. Off the coast to the southwest of California lies a high-pressure cell, the center of which is estimated to be six hundred miles to the southwest of San Francisco. Your high-pressure position is a relatively weak one resulting in gentle weather off the coast. Off the coast to the northwest, lies another weak high-pressure system and a very weak upper cold front lies about 250 to the northwest, over the area, but its influence was not felt locally. I submit a Pseudo-Adiabatic Diagram for 0000 August 16, 1942 and 1200 August 16, 1942 (Exhibit 19). The radiosonds for Oakland, taken at 0000 of the 16th and at 1200 of the 16th, show a well-developed inversion near the surface, which is characteristic of California weather at this time of the year. The base of the inversion is thirteen degrees centigrade. Below the inversion, the lapse rate is steep which is a characteristic of unstable or turbulent air. In the inversion proper the air is quite stable and would show practically no up-and-down motion in the air.

Weather observations, dated August 16, 1942, covering period 0700 to 1300 were submitted to the board and were admitted as evidence and marked "Exhibit 17."

Weather map prepared at U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California, dated August 16, 1942, time 0530, was submitted to the Board and was admitted in evidence and was marked "Exhibit 18."

Pseudo-Adiabatic diagram for 0000 August 16, 1942 and 1200 August 16, 1942, was submitted to the board and was admitted as evidence and marked "Exhibit 19.)"

4. Q. Have you the forecasts, sir?

A. I also submit the forecast prepared on August 15 covering the 15th up until 1800 on the 16th (Exhibit 20) and also the preliminary forecast for the 16th, covering the period up to 1800 of the 16th (Exhibit 21).

Weather forecast, dated August 15, 1942, time 1200 P.W.T., forecasting from the 15th to the 16th at 1800, was submitted to the board and was admitted as evidence and marked "Exhibit 20".

Weather forecast dated August 16, 1942, time 0730, P.W.T., covering the period up to 1800 of the 16th, was submitted to the Board and was admitted in evidence and was marked "Exhibit 21."

5. Q. From a study of your weather data on the morning of August 16, was there, in your opinion, any condition between San Francisco harbor entrance and the Farallones which could have caused sufficient turbulence to seriously effect the operation of the L-8?

A. No, sir.

6. Q. Anything which might have caused the pilots to have been thrown about in the car?

A. No, sir, not in my opinion.

7. Q. Or any condition likely to cause rapid descent of the L-8 while cruising in that area?

A. No, sir.

8. Q. Can you give us the visibility and ceiling in this area?

A. The average ceiling was 600 feet and the average visibility 12 miles.

9. Q. And also the force and direction of the wind?

A. I would say the average over that area was northwest eight knots.

10. Q. And the sea conditions?

A. The sea conditions, I would be unable to give you. All I could do would be to infer from the wind force.

11. Q. From the known conditions what would you assume the sea conditions to have been? Would there have been white caps on the sea?

A. No, sir.

12. Q. On your record of the Farallone reports at 0800 of that date, there was one marked "dropped ceiling from an average of 600 to 200 feet." Would you care to comment on that?

A. That is not an unusual condition. The overcast is really a high fog and it is simply that the fog in certain localities is lower than in others and it would be deemed in this case just a passing, temporary condition.

13. Q. What does your data show the top of this overcast to be in the area between the harbor entrance and the Farallones?

A. I should say that the clouds were 300 feet thick.

14. Q. And the average ceiling being 600, that would make it 900 feet on the top?

A. Yes, sir, but this is just an estimate. None of our reports show what the tops were.

15. Q. Any reports from Tamalpais?

A. He reports stratus from Montara to Reyes, top 1700 feet. There is a slope there of the clouds because the ceiling at Oakland was around 1100 feet where it was 600 at Farallones. So, the tops would probably descend the same way. The thickness along the coast at 1130 at Oakland--they give 1500 feet so that would be 200 feet thickness there at that time. San Francisco gives 1400--would make about 300 feet there. It may have been thicker out over the water. It is my belief that the tops of the clouds over the Farallones would be lower than reported by Tamalpais.

16. Q. No evidence of electrical disturbances?

A. No, sir. Electrical disturbances at that time would be impossible.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank, and present station.

A. Ensign Leland Luverne Dunn, U.S.N.R., at present attached to and serving with Pat Wing 8, VSL-D12, Alameda, California.

2. Q. Mr. Dunn, on the morning of August 16, were you instructed to institute a search for the airship L-8?

A. Yes, I was. I left the water at 9:35 from Alameda.

3. Q. Would you describe your search and approximate altitude?

A. Yes, the ceiling was about 800 feet and the top of the clouds about 1500 feet. I went out the main channel, directly toward the Farallone Islands, underneath the overcast, at an altitude of about 500 feet. The only thing of interest I noted was that half way between the bridge and the Farallone Islands in the channel was a fresh oil slick about eight to ten feet in diameter and with a trail-off extending about 100 yards. I investigated close to the water and then made a wider sweep circling the same oil slick at slightly higher altitude and repeated the circle. I then went closer to the Farallone Islands and went to a position about four miles southeast of the Farallones where I found another oil slick. This oil slick was large and was not new, as it was scummy and there was considerable debris--sticks, boxes, barrels and general rubbish of one kind and another. I covered the entire area between the Farallones Point Montara, sweeping back and forth at low altitude, investigated every article on the water and was observing in the upper air for the blimp but did not see it. This investigation took about one and one-half hours. I then proceeded out to sea, course 241, true, on the assumption that the blimp possibly had only radio trouble and was on patrol. I went out about fifteen--no it was twenty miles--at least twenty miles offshore, turned to head in at 330 true and proceeded for about ten miles.

4. Q. What's your starting point?  
A. In the vicinity of Point Montara. I believe I covered at least half of the area that the blimp was intended to search.
5. Q. Did you observe the airship L-8 at any time during your flight?  
A. I did not see it at any time.
6. Q. Did you observe anything on the surface other than what you have already described, other than the usual surface vessels?  
A. No, nothing other than the usual surface vessels.
7. Q. Did you climb through the overcast or get on top of it?  
A. No, I was entirely below.
8. Q. Had there been bodies on the surface in the vicinity of the main channel, do you feel reasonably sure you would have sighted them?  
A. Yes, I do. I was close enough to the water and I actually could see fish in the water, so anything on the surface I would have seen.
9. Q. What time did you ascend through the overcast?  
A. I went around the edge of it.
10. Q. At what time were you on top of the overcast?  
A. It was approximately eleven o'clock or 11:20--somewhere in there and I was near Point Reyes when I climbed up.
11. Q. Do you remember the height of the top of the overcast?  
A. Fifteen hundred feet.
12. Q. What was your flight number on this flight.  
A. One one seven (117).

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning. The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and present station?  
A. Lt. (jg) D.S. Gray, U.S.N.R., attached to and serving with Squadron VSI-D12, Naval Air Station, Alameda, Calif.
2. Q. Did you make any flights on the morning of August 16, 1942?  
A. Yes, I made a routine patrol flight, in the area designated at Point Montara, down to Point Sur, out to depth of fifty miles.
3. Q. What was the time of it?  
A. Took off at Alameda at 10:45 a.m.
4. Q. Were you under or over the overcast?  
A. During the morning the overcast had covered the whole area out there but it burned off. The Gate was clear. I had taken off at 10:45 and climbed to two thousand feet and came over the Gate at two thousand. About midway between the Gate and Point Montara the edge of the overcast began and I was approximately five hundred feet above it. That is, it was ahead of me and I was above it, looking down. I turned south and started down right off the edge of the Coast line and then proceeded to let down to go under the overcast. While letting down, about two miles from my

sterboard wing, at the course of about 190, I noticed an airship coming up through the overcast climbing at a rather steep angle. This was about 1100. The airship was on a course of approximately 330. I could not observe whether or not the airship's engines were running. The airship climbed clear of the overcast. In the meantime I had let down under it and continued on my course down the coast line. The position of the airship was almost abeam Salada beach and about three miles out to sea. I did not observe it thereafter at any time.

5. Q. Was there anything abnormal in the appearance of the airship at this time?

A. No, sir, I saw nothing abnormal in the appearance.

6. Q. Was the bag fully inflated.

A. It appeared fully inflated from the view I had of it which was just about a head-on view. I did not get any side view of it to tell whether or not it was sagging.

7. Q. For how long a period did you observe the airship?

A. About five to ten minutes.

8. Q. Do you recall when you descended through the overcast what the top of the overcast was?

A. The altitude at the top of the overcast was approximately 1500 feet.

9. Q. Did the action of the airship appear peculiar to you?

A. When I saw it coming up through the overcast I says "it is funny-- what's he climbing for? He could have gone into the clear by continuing on his course for about two miles." Also, the climbing angle seemed rather steep. His angle of inclination was pretty close to forty-five (45) degrees. I noticed when he came out of the overcast his bow came through first at this angle.

10. Q. Were you ordered to search for or report the movements of the L-8?

A. I was not ordered to search or report the movements of the L-8. I was ordered to carry out my patrol over my sector.

11. Q. Then you had no means of knowing that information concerning the L-8 was wanted?

A. I had no means of knowing.

12. Q. Either by your original orders or by radio interception?

A. No.

13. Q. Above the overcast, at approximately 1500 feet, were there any other clouds higher?

A. No sir. Ceiling was clear and unlimited above the overcast.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning. The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

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The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and present station.  
A. Dean Sidney Marcy, Lt. Medical Corps., USN, Assistant Medical Officer at Naval Air Station Dispensary, Moffett Field, Calif.

2. Q. Doctor, could you state from the medical records when Lt. Cody was last examined physically?

A. The last medical examination of Lt. Cody appearing on the record was made on June 16, 1942, at Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California. This examination showed Mr. Cody to be physically qualified for temporary appointment to Lt. and was not a flight physical.

3. Q. The previous examination on this officer?

A. Previous examination, according to his health record, was made June 30, 1941. At that time he was found physically and psychologically qualified for duty involving actual control of lighter-than-air aircraft.

4. Q. What do your medical records show as to the last physical examination of Ensign C. E. Adams?

A. Ensign C. E. Adams was examined on August 13, 1942 and found physically qualified for temporary appointment as Ensign.

5. Q. And previous examination?

A. The examination previous to that was on Sept. 25, 1941, aboard the U.S.S. Henley and found physically qualified for transfer at that time. There is no record of flight physical in his health record at all. This record goes back only to June 13, 1941 and he was found to be qualified for re-enlistment on that date.

6. Q. Doctor, do you know either Lt. Cody or Ensign Adams will enough to state how they might perform under stress?

A. I do not know Lt. Cody at all. Ensign Adams impressed me as being a very cool and level-headed man and I believe, under stress, he would certainly keep his faculties and conduct himself in a proper manner.

7. Q. Have you any knowledge of Ensign Adams' personal habits?

A. No, sir, I have no knowledge of his personal habits. No.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

At this point, a member of the Board, Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G), U.S.N.R. was called as a witness and duly sworn by the board and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Will you please state your name, rank and present station?

A. Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G), U.S.N.R., Executive Officer, U. S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

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2. Q. On this afternoon of August 16, did you see a depth bomb alleged to have been knocked off the airship L-8 on her contact with ground near Fort Funston?

A. Yes, that afternoon I proceeded to the beach in front of the Olympic Country Club area adjacent to Fort Funston and was escorted by an Army captain to a depth charge which was located about seventy-five (75) feet below the Skyline drive. This bomb was similar to the type carried by the ZP-32-325-pound depth charge. I then proceeded from the position where the bomb was located to the beach and interviewed a civilian named R. Capovilla and he showed me the position where the airship wheel had touched the beach and indicated the trail which the handling lines of the airship L-8 had marked on the beach. He also pointed out the position where where he observed the airship to strike the side of the embankment and observed an object to drop therefrom. This was the approximate location where I saw the depth charge.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say, and thereupon resumed his position as member of the Board.

The Board, then, at 4:30 p.m., adjourned until 10:00 a.m. August 27, 1942.

U. S. Naval Air Station  
Moffett Field, California  
Thursday, August 27, 1942.

The board met at 10 a.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;  
Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member;  
Lt. Commander Volney G. Finch, U.S.N. (Ret), member and  
Lt. (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder;  
George F. Phillips, Jr., Yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R., reporter.

No witnesses noth otherwise connected with the investigation were present.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the Recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and present station.

A. Lt. Wallace E. Allen, Medical Corps, U.S.N., at present attached to and serving as Flight Surgeon, Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, Calif.

2. Q. Doctor, were you also the flight surgeon for Squadron ZP-32?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. How well were you acquainted with Lt. Cody?

A. I did not know Lt. Cody personally. I have never examined him and to my knowledge have never had conversation with him.

4. Q. How long did you know Ensign Adams?

A. I knew Ensign C. E. Adams fairly well,--not intimately, but in our associations in mutual problems on the station concerning organization and such. I have known him over a period of about three months--since the establishment of this station. The explanation for the fact that I do not know these officers better is because of the commissioning activities of the Medical Department which have involved the majority of my time.

5. Q. Was Ensign Adams on flight status?

A. No, sir, his record shows no aviation physical examination for the reason that he is not one of those requiring a Form One examination.

6. Q. From your contacts with Ensign Adams, could you give the Board your estimate of his probable reactions under stress?

A. Well, having contacted him on the station several times in problems, I would say he was a level-headed and well-balanced individual.

7. Q. As to Lt. Cody--are you the custodian of his health record?

A. The health record is kept in the medical department of which I am a part.

8. Q. Could you tell the Board by referring to that record when Lt. Cody was last examined by a flight surgeon?

A. Yes, sir, the last examination in the record by a flight surgeon was at Lakehurst, N. J., on June 30, 1941, at which time he had a recheck aviation physical examination and was found to be entirely normal and qualified for actual control of lighter-than-air craft.

9. Q. Are there any more recent physical examinations of Lt. Cody than the one on June 30, 1942?

A. Yes, but not by a flight surgeon

10. Q. Is there any explanation for the absence of recent flight physical examination in Lt. Cody's case?

A. Yes, sir. The explanation for the fact that recheck examinations were not done on Naval Aviators--after the commissioning of this station in April--the 16th of April, 1942--was due to the fact medical department had not received the equipment with which to conduct these examinations. We still do not have the necessary equipment to conduct the examinations. We have been expecting it/any time.

11. Q. As a qualified flight surgeon, can you throw any further light on the accident to the L-8.

A. I am afraid not, sir.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning. The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows.

Examined by the Recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank and present station.

A. Henry Frank Burfeind, Lt. U.S.N., attached to and serving with Squadron ZP-32 at Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. Mr. Burfeind, did you prepare a chart showing reported positions of the L-8 on August 16, 1942.

A. I prepared a rough chart for the Squadron's use on which I plotted several positions which were reported to me at that time.

3. Q. And is this chart here, No. 5402, with the letters in red pencil "32" at the top, the chart you prepared?

A. Yes, it is, I prepared this chart at the direction of the Squadron Commander. The positions for whose accuracy I can vouch are take-off at east of the Farallones, and the position where the airship crossed the beach at 1115 in the vicinity of Fort Funston and the final landing at 1133 at Daly City. These other positions were estimated and plotted in for what information they could give and I do not regard them as accurate.

(A chart No. 5402, Point Sur to San Francisco, and marked in red pencil on the margin of the upper left hand corner "ZP-32" was submitted to the Board and was admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 22")

4. Q. Did you, as Gunnery Officer, receive a bomb from the local army authorities?

A. Yes, sir. A bomb was delivered at Moffett Field by the army and appeared to be the same bomb which had been on the L-8 although no positive identification can be made due to the fact that the identification marks had been painted over by the army demolition squad. The bomb was identical to the type of bomb carried by the L-8.

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5. Q. During that time, would you describe the course of the airship?  
A. I would say northwest when first seen and then it disappeared into the fog. When next noticed, it was southeast.

6. Q. It was headed southeast?  
A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. What was its approximate distance from the shore?  
A. From the shore, I would say one mile.

8. Q. What was its approximate altitude?  
A. It would have to be approximate, of course,--I do not know that far off--I would say about 800 feet.

9. Q. Did that height vary much during the time you saw it?  
A. I do not think so, sir.

10. Q. Did that height vary much during the time you saw it?  
A. I do not think so, sir.

11. Q. Did you take any pictures of the airship?  
A. Yes, sir, I took one picture.

12. Q. Is this the picture you took?  
A. Yes, sir.

13. Q. I show you this picture developed from the roll of films you delivered to me and ask you if that is the picture taken by you on Sunday, August 16?  
A. It is.

A picture of a portion of San Francisco beach and an object which appears to be an airship (circled in blue ink), was submitted to the Board and was admitted in evidence and was marked "Exhibit 23."

14. Q. Can you identify the airship which you saw on the photograph?  
A. I can, sir.

15. Q. Will you say if it is within the ink circle?  
A. Yes, it is within the ink circle.

16. Q. Did you observe the airplane which was above and to the left of the airship?  
A. Yes, sir.

17. Q. Could you state what type the airplane was?  
A. It was a pontoon-equipped Navy plane.

18. Q. About how long did you observe the airship?  
A. Well, without thinking, I would say five minutes. A total period of about five minutes from when I first saw it to when I last saw it though, she was in the clouds for about two minutes of that time.

19. Q. When you first saw the airship did the bag appear to be in a normal shape?  
A. Yes, sir, in normal shape.

20. Q. Was the airship on an even keel when you observed it?  
A. Yes, sir.

21. Q. The second time you saw it, after it emerged from the clouds, was it in the same shape?

A. No, sir, it had a slight sag in the center on top. It showed a slight distortion on the top of the bag.

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22. Q. At the time of the second sighting when the bag appeared to be distorted, could you testify whether or not the engines were running?

A. No, sir, I could not.

23. Q. Was the airship then on an even keel?

A. Yes, sir.

24. Q. After you observed the ship breaking through the cloud bank, did you notice whether or not it was descending at a slow rate or rapidly?

A. I did not notice that it was descending. If I had of I could have watched it farther.

25. Q. When did you lose sight of the airship?

A. When we turned inshore at Sloat Blvd.

26. Q. What would you estimate her height at the time you last saw her?

A. Still eight hundred feet.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rate, and present station.

A. David Finus White, Storekeeper, first class, U.S.N., attached as mail clerk to LION ONE, located in the U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett Field, California.

2. Q. Did you, on the morning of August 16, 1942, see the airship at any time?

A. Yes, sir.

3. Q. What time did you see it?

A. About 1045.

4. Q. What was your approximate position at the time you saw the airship?

A. I was riding in an automobile near the intersection of Fulton Street and the Great Highway, then driving south on the Great Highway, in San Francisco, California. Except for two minutes, it was visible from the time we drove from the corner of Fulton Street and the Great Highway to the corner of Sloat Blvd., and the Great Highway.

5. Q. During that time, would you describe the course of the airship?

A. I would say northwest when first seen and then it disappeared into the fog. When next noticed, it was southeast.

6. Q. It was headed southeast?

A. Yes, sir.

7. Q. What was its approximate distance from the shore?

A. From the shore I would say one mile.

8. Q. What was its approximate altitude?  
A. It would have to be approximate, of course,--I do not know that far off--I would say about 800 feet.

9. Q. Did that height vary much during the time you saw it?  
A. I do not think so, sir.

10. Q. Did you observe whether her engines were running?  
A. I could not tell, sir. I am sure they must have been running when she headed northwest because she was making her way into the wind.

11. Q. Did you take any pictures of the airship?  
A. Yes, sir, I took one picture.

12. Q. Is this the picture you took?  
A. Yes, sir.

13. Q. I show you this picture developed from the roll of films you delivered to me and ask you if that is the picture taken by you on Sunday, August 16?  
A. It is.

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21. Q. The second time you saw it, after it emerged from the clouds, was it in the same shape?

A. No sir, it had a slight sag in the center on top. It showed a slight distortion on the top of the bag.

22. Q.  
At the time of the second sighting when the bag appeared to be distorted, could you testify whether or not the engines were running?  
A. No, sir, I could not.

23. Q. Was the airship then on an even keel?  
A. Yes, sir.

24. Q. After you observed the ship breaking through the cloud bank, did you notice whether or not it was descending at a slow rate or rapidly?  
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25. Q. When did you lose sight of the airship?  
A. When we turned inshore at Sloat Blvd.

26. Q. What would you estimate her height at the time you last saw her?  
A. Still eight hundred feet.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

A witness, called by the recorder, entered, was informed of the subject matter of the investigation, was duly sworn and declared as follows:

Examined by the Recorder:

1. Q. Please state your name, rank, and present station?

A. Lt. C. Walsh, I-V(S), U.S.N.R., District Intelligence Officer, San Francisco, California.

2. Q. Pursuant to the direction of the District Intelligence Officer, did you make an investigation into the crash of the airship L-8 which occurred August 16, 1942?

A. I did.

3. Q. Did you contact surface craft and aircraft reported to be in the area between the Golden Gate and the Farallones between the hours of 0600 and 1100 on that date?

A. After studying a chart issued by the District Operations Officer which showed all surface and aircraft in the area between the hours of 0600 and 1100, with exception of fishing boats which were covered by yourself, Lt. (j.g.) Cuthbert B. Currie. Agent Kelso and I have contacted all surface craft and aircraft which were anywhere in the vicinity in the area roughly bounded by the Farallones and a strip approximately five miles paralleling the channel going in the direction of the Farallones. Maybe 10 miles. That included fishing boats, minesweepers, Coast Guard cutters, station boats and two commercial boats, one a maritime vessel, and one commercial vessel, the Daisy Gray. The aircraft included the Clipper from Honolulu, Army P-38 pursuit planes, an Army Hudson bomber and several other planes, most of which were making routine flights and one of which was specifically sent out to search for the L-8.

4. Q. All pertinent information you obtained has been given to this Board of Investigation?

A. Of my own knowledge, I cannot state that, but I do know all witnesses whom I felt had pertinent information were referred to this board for questioning. In addition to those witnesses, we interview scores of others whose information was either negligible or immaterial as far as this case was concerned.

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Q. 5./Did you also institute an investigation covering the condition of Lt. Cody and Ensign Adams on the morning of August 16, and immediately prior to the time of the take-off?

A. Yes, an investigation was made by myself and my assistant, Agent Kelso, to the extent that the information which I could gather at Treasure Island was obtained. I did not make any investigation as to Moffett Field, as to home conditions, or as to what others in this vicinity could state; but we spoke to three different people--Naval personnel, who had been in close personal contact with both officers on the morning of the flight. All three were in accord to the effect that both officers were cold sober. There was no evidence they had been drinking and that there did not appear to be any animosity or friction between them and from their personal observation both were in full possession of faculties and all conditions were normal as of any other prior flight. Exhaustive check of all coastal points between Half Moon Bay and the harbor entrance also was made, without disclosing any definite information. I have nothing further to add at this time.

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say

The witness was duly warned and withdrew.

The board, then, at 12:10 p.m. adjourned until 1:00 p.m. August 28, 1942.

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U. S. Naval Air Station,  
Moffett Field, California,  
Friday, August 28, 1942.

The board met at 1:10 p.m.

Present:

Commander Francis B. Connell, DE-V(G) U.S.N.R., senior member;

Commander Karl L. Lange, A-V(G) U.S.N.R., member

Lt. Commander Volney C. Finch, U.S.M. (Ret), member and

Lt. (jg) Cuthbert B. Currie, I-V(S) U.S.N.R., recorder,

George Finley Phillips, Jr., yeoman second class, V-6, U.S.N.R.,  
reporter.

No witnesses not otherwise connected with the investigation were  
present.

The record of proceedings of the sixth, seventh and eighth days was  
read and approved.

The recorder was called as a witness by the recorder and was duly  
sworn.

Examined by the recorder:

1. Q. State your name, rank and present station.

A. Cuthbert B. Currie, Lt. (jg), I-V(S), U.S.N.R., recorder of this  
Board.

2. Q. Do you have any exhibits to offer at this time which would add  
to the record in this hearing?

A. I do. I submit a certified copy of a radio log for Wing Control,  
U.S. Naval Air Station, Alameda, California, dated August 16, 1942, from  
1200 G.C.T. (0500 P.W.T.) to 2400 G.C.T. (1700 P.W.T.), (The foregoing  
radio log was submitted to the Board and was admitted in evidence and  
marked "Exhibit 24".) I submit a letter dated August 26, 1942, from  
Douglas Hayden, Chief Special Agent, Pacific Telephone and Telegraph  
Company, to the Board of Investigation, U.S. Naval Air Station, Moffett  
Field, Calif., which states that the crash of the airship L-8 on August 16  
in Daly City, California caused less than ten dollars' damage to the Pacific  
Telephone and Telegraph Company and that they do not intend to make any  
claim for this damage. (The foregoing letter was submitted to the Board  
and was admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 25".) I submit a photo-  
graph of U.S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8, fully inflated, and in normal  
operating Condition. (This photograph was submitted to the Board and was  
admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 26".) I submit a photo graph  
showing the port side of the U.S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8 which picture  
was taken shortly prior to its deflation and landing in Daly City,  
California. It should be noted from this picture that neither propellor  
is revolving. (This photograph was submitted to the Board and was admitted  
in evidence and marked "Exhibit 27".) I submit a picture showing the  
starboard side of the non-rigid airship L-8 shortly before it completely  
deflated and landed in Daly City on August 16, 1942. It should be noted  
that the door of the car appears to be completely open at the time this  
picture was taken. (This photograph was submitted to the board and was  
admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 28".) I submit a picture taken  
shortly after the U.S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8 landed in Daly City,  
showing the tear in the envelope resulting from contact with a cross-arm  
on the nearby telephone pole, and the general location of the airship and  
bag upon landing. (This photograph was submitted to the board and admitted

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in evidence and marked "Exhibit 29".) I submit a photograph taken shortly after the U.S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8 landed in Daly City, showing the torn condition of the bag. (This photograph was submitted to the board and was admitted in evidence and Marked "Exhibit 30.") I submit a photograph showing the starboard side of the car of the L-8 and her position upon landing at Daly City. It should be noted that the rip cord is intact and that one set of ear phones is hanging on the side of the door and the microphone for the Bogen loud speaker system has been attached to the bomb rack. (This photograph was submitted to the board and admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 31.") I submit a photograph showing the port side of the car of the U. S. Navy non-rigid airship L-8, shortly after its deflation and landing at Daly City, California. (This photograph was admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 32.") I submit a picture of the envelope of the L-8 which was taken after it had been returned to Moffett Field, California and spread out on the deck. This photograph shows the numerous tears in the bag. (This photograph was submitted to the board and was admitted in evidence and marked "Exhibit 33".)

The board informed the witness that he was privileged to make any further statement covering anything relating to the subject matter of the investigation which he thought should be a matter of record in connection therewith, which had not been fully brought out by the previous questioning.

The witness stated that he had nothing further to say.

The witness was duly warned and resumed his seat as recorder.

The investigation was finished, all parties thereto withdrawing.

After full and mature deliberation, the board finds as follows:

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CONFIDENTIAL

1. Competent Orders.--That the non-rigid airship L-8 was performing a routine patrol under competent orders with Lieutenant E. DeWitt Cody, U.S.N., acting as pilot and Ensign Charles Ellis Adams as passenger.

2. Airworthiness and Equipment.--That the L-8 took off from Treasure Island, San Francisco, California, at 0603, August 16, 1942, being then airworthy and adequately equipped for the designated mission.

3. Pilot Competency.--That the pilot was in all respects competent

4. Weather conditions.--That the weather during this flight was favorable.

5. Known movements under control.--that the L-8 was under control, in radio communication with shore, and reported that she was investigating a suspicious slick about four (4) miles Southeast of the Farallone Islands at 0738 of August 16, 1942.

That at about 0742 the L-8 dropped two float-lights in the vicinity of buoy F between the Farallone Islands and San Francisco Harbor Entrance, and maneuvered low over these lights until about 0815.

6. Later Movements.--That thereafter until about 1115, the exact movements of the L-8 and the conditions aboard her are unknown.

7. Grounding --That at about 1115 the L-8 drifted in from sea in the vicinity of Fort Funston unmanned, partially deflated, engines stopped, and with door open, grounding gently once near the beach and again nearby. That on the second grounding, one depth bomb was knocked off, lightening her so that she rose and drifted to Daly City, California where she finally grounded and deflated as a result of tearing her bag on a power pole.

8. Items Missing.-- That at final grounding, the pilot and passenger, two life-jackets, two float-lights, one bomb (later recovered), and about sixty per cent (60%) of her original fuel supply were the only items missing.

9. Disposable Weight Remaining.--That at first grounding approximately one thousand (1000) pounds of readily disposable weight, including fuel sufficient for approximately four (4) hours' normal flight remained aboard.

10. Observed at final grounding.--That at final grounding (a) both engines had stopped prior to first contact with the ground; (b) All ignition switches were turned to "on" position; (c) Fuel valves were turned to allow flow of fuel to carburetors, and sufficient fuel remained for four (4) hours at cruising speed; (d) Radio motor-generator was turning over; (e) Radio transmitter and receiver switches were turned on, as was the switch to the Bogen Hailer; (f) the battery was nearing complete discharge; (g) The helium valve, the air valves, and the rip panel were intact; (h) The port air damper was open as for automatic operation; (i) The car door was latched fully open and (j) The weighted brief-case and restricted publications therein were intact and in their original position at take-off.

11. Conditions at later examination.--That subsequent examination and test showed all engines, engine accessories, radio equipment, instruments and flight controls to be in normal operating condition. That there had been no fire, no submersion, and that no missile had struck the L-8.

C O P Y

C O P Y

12. No misconduct.--That there is no evidence of any violation of orders or instructions, nor of any misconduct by the pilot, passenger or any ground personnel.

13. Persons missing.--That the pilot, Lt. Ernest DeWitt Cody, U.S. Navy and the passenger, Ensign (T) Charles Ellis Adams, U.S. Navy are and have been missing since prior to the return of the aircraft to shore.

14. No civilians injured.--That there was no injury to any person on the ground as a result of this flight or subsequent grounding.

#### OPINION

1. That no reason has been adduced for the fact that the pilot and passenger are missing. (a) Careful analysis of the evidence indicates no reason for voluntary abandonment of the airship, since there was no enemy attack, fire, structural failure, stress of weather, or loss of control. Engine failure, if it occurred, would have provided no such reason since disposable weights aboard were adequate to permit free ballooning to a safe landing.

(b) The Board therefore believes that abandonment was involuntary. Doubts as to fastening of the safety lock at take-off, and adequacy of the latch suggest the possibility that the latch might have been released accidentally, permitting the passenger to fall out. The two float lights dropped, the rapid maneuvers of the airship close to the water, and the two missing life-belts might well indicate an attempt on the part of the pilot to mark the spot where his passenger floated, to provide him with temporary assistance, and to recover him from the water. The presence of all parachutes rules out abandonment at any considerable altitude, and failure to use the radio or the life-raft might indicate that the pilot hoped to recover his passenger very quickly. The fact that both engines were stopped might be explained by the pilot's attempt to slow the airship while heading into a very light breeze. The open door latched fully forward, the microphone and radio head-set hanging out the door lend credence to this theory. In such an attempt the pilot might himself have gone overboard.

(c) Natural physical laws would then have caused the unmanned airship, relieved of the weight of its occupants, to rise beyond pressure height, valve some helium, partially deflate, descend, and drift ashore with the wind. The loss of one bomb near Fort Funston lightened her sufficiently to allow one final rise during which she drifted to her final landing at Daly City.

(d) No other adequate explanation offers itself for the abandonment of an airworthy airship in the absence of fire or other casualty, nor does any other theory explain failure to use the radio. Nor is any satisfactory reason found for failure of surface vessels to sight the two men in the water, or their inability to make their way to some nearby ship, assisted by their life-jackets, unless the latter failed, or some further accident occurred after they fell from the airship.

2. That no responsibility can be fixed therefore; that there is no evidence of misconduct; and that no further action is recommended.

C O P Y

C O P Y

3. That the damages to the airship L-8 consisted of multiple tears and cuts in the envelope, minor damage to the car, engines and control surfaces. That the cost of repair will total approximately Twelve Thousand Five Hundred (\$12,500) Dollars providing a new envelope is not required. That should a new envelope be required, the cost is estimated to be Thirty-Three Thousand Five Hundred (\$33,500) Dollars. That the time required to return the L-8 to service, using spare envelope and engines, would be fifteen (15) days.

4. That the damages to private and corporate property are estimated to be (a) to power lines of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Seventy-Eight Dollars and Sixty-Two Cents (\$78.62), (b) to telephone lines of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, less than Ten Dollars (\$10.00), and (c) to other property owners, negligible and no claim anticipated.

Francis B. Connell,  
DE-V(G) Commander, United States  
Naval Reserve,  
senior member.

Karl L. Lange,  
Commander, A-V(G), United States  
Naval Reserve,  
member.

Volney C. Finch,  
Lieutenant Commander, U. S. Navy (Ret),  
member.

The record of proceedings of the ninth day of the investigation was read and approved, the board being cleared during the reading of so much thereof as pertains to the proceedings in cleared court, and the board having finished the investigation, adjourned to await the action of the convening authority.

Francis B. Connell,  
Commander, DE-V(G), U. S. Naval  
Reserve, senior member.

Cuthbert B. Currie,  
Lieutenant (j.g.), I-V(S), U. S.  
Naval Reserve,  
recorder.

C O P Y